



The Future of G20 and Africa



#2404



Glimpses: Event on "The Future of G20 and Africa" with keynote speaker Anil Sooklal, discussants Rajiv Bhatia & Harsh Vardhan Shringla, and moderator Pradeep S Mehta

ABOUT THE BOOKLET

Welcome to our e-booklet, on ‘The Future of G20 and Africa,’ which details significant developments and discussions surrounding Africa’s evolving role within the G20 framework. This booklet highlights the milestones achieved and the collaborative efforts undertaken to enhance Africa’s participation in global governance, underscoring its critical role in shaping a sustainable and equitable global future.

It showcases the cooperative efforts that have strengthened Africa’s integration and the shared aspirations of fostering solidarity, economic integration, and sustainable development in alignment with global goals.

This compilation of initiatives emphasises inclusivity and shared responsibility. The articles presented here capture the essence of these discussions, showcasing Africa’s potential to contribute to a more equitable and prosperous global future.

This booklet aims to inspire continued collaboration and innovative solutions to address global challenges, reaffirming the G20’s commitment to a balanced and just international order.

PREFACE



Pradeep S Mehta
Secretary General
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The global governance landscape stands at a critical juncture, as nations across the world grapple with interconnected challenges ranging from geopolitical tensions to climate change and economic inequalities.

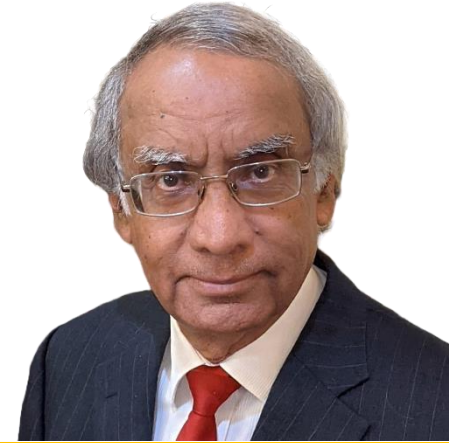
At the centre of these challenges, the G20 serves as a vital multilateral platform, uniting diverse voices from the Global North and South to find solutions for a fractured world. This booklet encapsulates the essence of a pivotal discussion held during an engaging event organised by CUTS International, featuring Ambassador Anil Sooklal, South Africa's former G20 Sherpa and currently, their High Commissioner to India, as the keynote speaker.

Two distinguished former Indian diplomats: Rajiv Bhatia and Harsh Vardhan Shringla were discussants. The audience was composed of leading policymakers, diplomats, and thinkers who explored the evolving role of the G20 through the lens of recent and upcoming presidencies.

The event provided a comprehensive analysis of the G20's trajectory. The discussions underscored the critical leadership roles played by Indonesia, India, Brazil, and now South Africa — four successive presidencies from the Global South.

CUTS International has been an active advocate for inclusive global governance and multilateralism, other than South-South Cooperation, collaborating with African nations since the early 2000s. Through its centres in Lusaka, Nairobi, and Accra, alongside partnerships with over 50 African institutions, CUTS has served as a catalyst in addressing key issues such as trade, economic governance, regional integration, and sustainable development in Africa for over 30 years.

The organisation's consistent engagement in forums like T20, B20, and C20 in India and Brazil, coupled with its dedication to integrating African priorities into the global agenda, highlights its unwavering commitment to fostering equitable growth and cooperation. As the G20 evolves in response to an increasingly interconnected yet polarised world, this booklet compiles reflections and lessons derived from the discussions.



Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia

Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House
Chair, FICCI Task Force on Blue Economy
Former Member, of CII's International Advisory Council,
Trade Policy Council, and Africa Committee

The G20 has evolved into a vital forum for addressing global challenges, fostering cooperation, and ensuring balanced representation. The e-booklet, *“Future of G20 and South Africa,”* provides a comprehensive exploration of Africa’s growing role in this influential grouping. As South Africa assumes the G20 presidency, this moment represents not only a milestone for the continent but also an opportunity to redefine global priorities through the lens of inclusivity and sustainability.

India’s presidency of the G20 reinvigorated the forum by championing key initiatives such as the Global Biofuel Alliance and Mission LiFE, while advancing collaborative solutions to global challenges.

South Africa’s contributions to the G20 extend beyond symbolism. As a voice for Africa, it actively shapes discourse on sustainable development, climate action, fair trade practices, and the digital economy. This e-booklet delves into South Africa’s leadership in advocating for debt relief, enhanced development financing, and equitable resource distribution priorities that resonate deeply across the Global South.

It emphasises the significance of the partnership, particularly between Africa and other regions, in addressing shared challenges. The lessons drawn from South Africa's leadership journey can serve as a guide for ensuring that the G20's agenda remains relevant, action-oriented, and inclusive.

As a proactive member of the international policy community and a committed advocate for Africa's integration into global affairs, I view this transition as a profound opportunity. South Africa's presidency should focus on fostering collaboration, ensuring continuity in key initiatives, and prioritising accountability to deliver tangible outcomes. Let us draw inspiration from this e-booklet which serves as both a reflection on past achievements and a forward-looking vision for a more inclusive G20.

CHAPTER 1

Lessons from India's Presidency

India's presidency highlighted its leadership in bridging diverse perspectives, fostering consensus, and amplifying the voices of the Global South, shaping a sustainable and resilient global future

India's G20 presidency marked a significant milestone in global governance, underscoring its role as a bridge between the global North and the global South. Under the theme of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** (One Earth, One Family, One Future), India embraced a vision to rewrite the narrative of global governance by promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and addressing the needs of developing nations. Through its leadership, India demonstrated its capacity to manage complex geopolitical issues while prioritising critical global challenges, such as climate change, economic recovery, and digital transformation.

One of its notable achievements was securing the African Union's inclusion as a permanent member of the G20. This historic moment, driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's active engagement with African leaders, reflected India's commitment to have the voices of marginalised regions like Africa, in the global decision-making processes. The inclusion of the African Union was part of a broader effort to make global governance more representative and reflective of current demographic and economic realities.

India also launched the *Voice of the Global South Summit*, which served as a vital platform for emerging economies to convene, discuss shared challenges, and explore collective solutions. The summit amplified the aspirations and concerns of the global South, fostering a sense of ownership among developing nations that have often been excluded from key international forums. India's efforts emphasised the importance of tailored solutions for the unique challenges faced by these nations, advocating for a more inclusive and equitable approach to global problem-solving.

The Indian presidency also navigated complex geopolitical tensions, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict. By promoting dialogue and diplomacy, India ensured that the G20 remained focused on its core mandate of addressing macroeconomic and development issues. This approach helped avoid divisive geopolitical debates within the group, preserving its relevance and effectiveness.

India was particularly focused on sustainability, resilience, and human-centric development. Initiatives such as the launch of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and climate change mitigation strategies showcased innovative approaches to addressing global

challenges. Furthermore, the advocacy of a “lifestyle for the environment” encouraged sustainable consumption patterns, aligning with the global agenda for climate action.

The G20’s emphasis on these critical issues, coupled with India’s consensus-building efforts, ensured that significant global challenges were effectively addressed. India’s leaders have contributed to progress on equity and inclusion, especially for vulnerable populations in a post-pandemic world.

India’s G20 presidency redefined the role of the summits, expanding its scope beyond economic discussions to include a broader focus on equity and inclusion. Acting as a bridge between the global North and South, India ensured that the voices of developing countries were heard and their concerns addressed. This approach fostered unity among G20 members and set a precedent for future presidencies to adopt a holistic and inclusive approach to global governance.

CHAPTER 2

Lessons from Brazil and Indonesia's Presidency

Indonesia's Presidency emphasised recovery through health, energy transition, and digital transformation, fostering collaboration among developing nations while Brazil prioritised sustainability, social inclusion, and food security.

Brazil

Brazil's presidency of the G20 in 2024 built on the momentum created by its predecessors, focusing on sustainability, inclusivity, and addressing the aspirations of developing nations. Operating under the theme of *Building Sustainable Societies and a Sustainable Planet*, Brazil prioritised ecological protection, equitable improvement, and global collaboration. The country's unique position as the custodian of the Amazon rainforest symbolised its leadership in environmental governance, advocating for biodiversity conservation, climate action, and a balanced approach to economic growth.

Sustainability was at the heart of Brazil's agenda, with a strong emphasis on renewable energy and the transition to green economies. Brazil championed international cooperation in climate finance and technology transfer, empowering developing countries to meet their climate commitments. By emphasising the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability and economic development, Brazil underscored the importance of addressing climate change as a shared global responsibility.

As a leader of the global South, Brazil played a pivotal role in bridging the divide between developed and developing nations. Building on India's efforts, Brazil ensured the voices of marginalised regions were central to the G20 discussions. It fostered consensus on contentious issues, including climate change, international economic reforms, and equitable access to resources. Its presidency advocated for reforms in global financial institutions and equitable access to better serve the needs of developing nations and aligned international trade policies with sustainable development goals. These efforts reinforced the interconnected nature of economic, social, and environmental challenges.

In addition to environmental priorities, Brazil highlighted the social dimensions of sustainability. Key areas of focus included gender equity, education, and healthcare access, showing its dedication to addressing social inequalities. Brazil also advanced discussions on food security, digital transformation, and inclusive economic growth, ensuring that these critical issues remained integral to the G20's agenda.

Despite the challenges posed by geopolitical tensions, including the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Brazil effectively steered the G20's focus toward solidarity and multilateralism. Its leadership preserved the forum's relevance, enabling progress on pressing global issues like climate finance, economic reform, and sustainable development. By navigating complex dynamics, Brazil reinforced the importance of collective action and shared values in addressing global challenges.

Brazil's presidency emphasised continuity in global governance, building on the achievements of its predecessors while laying a strong foundation for future G20 initiatives. Its leadership underscored the need for a balanced approach in which economic growth, social equity, and environmental conservation coexist harmoniously. By prioritising inclusivity and sustainability, Brazil's presidency reaffirmed the G20's role as a platform for constructive dialogue and collaborative solutions to the world's most pressing issues.

Indonesia

Indonesia's presidency of the G20 in 2022 came at a critical moment as the world confronted the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the theme of *Recover Together, Recover Stronger*, Indonesia prioritised resilience, inclusivity, and innovation to address immediate recovery needs while laying the groundwork for long-term global stability.

A key focus of Indonesia's agenda was post-pandemic recovery. It emphasised the need to boost the equitable distribution of vaccines, strengthen healthcare systems and create resilient supply chains to address inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic. Highlighting the unequal distribution of global burdens, Indonesia also advocated recovery plans focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are vital for job creation and economic stability in developing countries.

Indonesia's leadership strongly emphasised digital transformation. The country worked to enhance access to digital infrastructure and encouraged innovative solutions to bridge the technological divide, aiming to close the gap in technology use. This approach sought to uplift marginalised communities while supporting Indonesia's broader goal of fostering growth that is both sustainable and inclusive. It also addressed global inequalities in technology access.

As the first of four upcoming presidencies from the global South, Indonesia brought attention to the importance of inclusivity and fairness in world governance. It underscored the valuable roles played by developing countries while stressing the need to tackle climate change, improve the conditions tied to aid, harness the benefits of digital technology, and promote sustainable development. By placing inclusivity at the forefront, Indonesia laid a foundation for future presidencies to advance the agenda of equitable global representation.

Indonesia's presidency demonstrated the importance of resilience, collaboration, and adaptability in addressing global challenges. By focusing on immediate pandemic recovery while fostering long-term innovation and inclusivity, it reinforced the G20's role as a platform for global cooperation. The legacy of Indonesia's leadership serves as a testament to the power of collective action in building a stronger and more equitable future.

CHAPTER 3

South Africa's G20 Presidency

What can we expect

South Africa's Presidency focused on inclusive growth, sustainable development, and addressing global inequality. It highlighted the importance of enhancing Africa's role in global decision-making and advocated for more equitable solutions to global challenges.

South Africa's upcoming presidency of the G20, set to take place in 2025, marks a critical moment for Africa's role in shaping global governance. Under the theme of *Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability*, South Africa leverages its leadership to amplify the continent's voice, address systemic inequities, and highlight Africa's growing role in shaping global policies.

This presidency not only highlights the African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member but also provides a unique opportunity to build on this foundation, positioning Africa as a key player in global governance.

As the first nation to lead the G20 since the African Union's inclusion, South Africa faces the formidable responsibility of unifying the continent's diverse priorities.

A key focus is the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which aims to boost intra-African trade and promote regional economic integration. By fostering collaboration with the African Union and regional economic communities, South Africa underscores the AfCFTA's potential as a transformative vehicle for economic cooperation and development.

South Africa's presidency has also emphasised tackling pressing issues like poverty alleviation, economic integration, and environmental sustainability, underscoring the interconnected nature of global challenges. It prioritises equitable resource distribution and the implementation of inclusive economic policies to foster sustainable growth. Digital innovation and economic collaboration will play pivotal roles in transforming Africa's prospects and ensuring global challenges are addressed through inclusive partnerships. By advocating for global financial reforms, South Africa aims to establish a more inclusive economic framework for developing nations.

The inclusion of the African Union in the G20 presents both significant opportunities and considerable responsibilities. South Africa's presidency lays a strong foundation for Africa's future engagement in global governance. Its focus on systemic change and collaboration ensures that the G20 remains a platform for advancing Africa's interests while contributing to global prosperity.

By uniting African priorities and championing systemic reforms, South Africa's leadership aims to amplify the continent's voice will resonate in global forums for years to come. South Africa's presidency in 2025 is poised to bridge gaps across regions and sectors, creating a platform for sustainable and inclusive growth.

CHAPTER 4

Way Forward

The future of the G20 will depend on how effectively it responds to the evolving challenges of today's interconnected world. To remain relevant and impactful, it must prioritise inclusivity, foster collaboration and address the needs of both the global North and South. These steps are essential for ensuring the G20 can effectively tackle major global challenges.

A significant step toward inclusivity was the inclusion of the African Union, marking a milestone for better representation. Building on this progress, the G20 should strengthen the voice of developing countries in its decision-making process. Collaborating with underrepresented regional groups can help address governance gaps and create a more equitable forum. By incorporating diverse perspectives, the G20 can address global inequalities and ensure that everyone has a role in shaping the policies that affect them.

The G20 serves as a crucial bridge between the global North and South, fostering dialogue and cooperation. In recent years, countries such as Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa have demonstrated how the global South can influence the G20 agenda by highlighting critical issues like post-pandemic recovery, climate action, and economic integration. Strengthening this partnership is important for addressing shared challenges and finding common ground on global priorities. The G20's success in uniting countries will depend on its ability to manage conflicting interests while maintaining focus on collective goals.

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has strained the G20, complicating its efforts to remain united and focused on its core mission of promoting economic and development cooperation. To navigate these challenges, the G20 must prioritise innovative diplomacy and remain committed to multilateralism. Balancing its primary objectives with the complexities of geopolitical tensions is key to preserving its relevance and effectiveness.

The G20 needs to strengthen its commitment to sustainable development by addressing critical global issues, such as climate change, digital transformation and public health. Focusing on climate finance, transitioning towards renewable energy, and ensuring fair access to digital resources can help promote sustainable growth and new ideas. By aligning its strategies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the G20 can play a pivotal role in advancing long-term global progress and reaffirming its leadership in addressing today's interconnected challenges.

Collaboration is vital for the G20 to remain effective. By partnering with international organisations, civil society, and the private sector, the G20 can leverage resources and expertise to tackle complex global issues. Strengthening these networks will enhance the group's capacity to adapt to emerging challenges and implement practical, inclusive solutions that benefit all stakeholders. Expanding these partnerships is critical to increasing the G20's influence and impact on the global stage.





ABOUT CUTS AFRICAN CENTRES

CUTS established its Africa Regional Centres in Lusaka in 2001, Nairobi in 2003, and Accra in 2013, respectively.

CUTS International, a global policy research and advocacy group with over 40 years of experience, is a leading voice in promoting trade, effective regulation, and good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. With resource centres in Accra, Lusaka, and Nairobi, we focus on trade, investment, competition policy, consumer protection, and capacity building to enhance economic integration and sustainable development.

We collaborate with governments, intergovernmental organisations, and global forums like G20 and B20, advocating for the African Union's integration into the global economy. Our initiatives address trade, development, gender, digitalisation, and strategic issues, aiming to foster inclusive growth and informed policy-making across the continent.

Additionally, CUTS Africa centres have MOUs with the COMESA Secretariat and EAC Secretariat.

CUTS International, Lusaka promotes pro-poor policy and practical reforms, supports regional integration and engages in long-term capacity building for diverse stakeholders to address developmental challenges in Zambia and in the Southeast Africa region.

CUTS Nairobi has continued to offer a wide array of services, including knowledge generation on key issues affecting consumer welfare in Kenya and the EAC region.

CUTS Accra was established to pursue CUTS's Vision of 'Consumer Sovereignty' in the West African region. It functions as a resource centre for research, analysis, advocacy, and capacity-building activities in partnership with local state and non-state actors.

CUTS International

Established in 1983, CUTS International (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) is a non-governmental organisation, with its Mission: Consumer Sovereignty in the Framework of Social Justice and Economic Equality and Environmental Balance, within and across Borders.

For details, please visit:
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