



AFRICA WEEK SUMMARY

May 28 - 29, 2025, Future Africa, University of Pretoria

The G20 interfaith forum recently convened dialogue discussions with interfaith representatives, youth leaders and G20 engagement groups.

The purpose of these discussions was to inspire collaboration on FoRB policies focused on Africa, to strengthen social partners' voices, and identify practical initiatives to advance South Africa's G20 priorities of solidarity, equality, and sustainability



IF20

G20 INTERFAITH FORUM



CONFERENCE SUMMARY



On May 28-29, 2025, the G20 Interfaith Forum Association hosted a two-day conference on “African Traditional Religious Belief Systems and Spirituality, Voice of the Youth, and Themes, Priorities of the South African G20 Presidency, and Best Practices for Policy Recommendation, Formulation, and Submission.”



Ambassador Mussie Hailu Gebretsadik, Regional Director of URI for Africa and Representative to the African Union and UN Office in Africa Speaking at the G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week

Dear participants of the African week conference, brothers and sisters, all protocol observed. Good morning. On this momentous occasion of the Africa Week conference, I extend warm greetings and hearts felt solidarity to all Africans and people of African descendants across the continent, in the diaspora, and to all participants on behalf of members of United Religions Initiative from diverse religion, spiritual expression, indigenous tradition and cultures in Africa and the rest of the world.

URI is an international grassroots organization, interface organization, which is promoting enduring, daily interface cooperation to end religiously motivated violence and to promote culture of peace, justice and healing for the earth and all living beings.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of the 2025 Africa Week conference. This conference is as timely and important as it is a strategic gathering which brings together leaders of higher education institutions from across Africa and beyond, alongside key stakeholders from government, business, civil society, faith-based organizations and the media. The summit provides a high level platform for meaningful dialog and collaboration aimed at strengthening African research, enhancing its global visibility and amplifying its influence, particularly through the role of higher education institution. This Pan African platform for collaborative research, designed to make practical recommendation, which will also help to move forward the African Renaissance Initiative concept, which envisions the African people to overcome the current challenge confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific and economic renewal. The Africa week serves also as a reminder of the continent's shared history and collective efforts in achieving the Africa we want as enshrined in the Africa agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 is Africa blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its call for inclusive and sustainable development and is also a concrete manifestation of the Pan African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under the pan Africanism and the African Renaissance. Agenda 2063 is both a vision and a plan of action. It's a call for action to all segment of African societies, including faith-based

communities and spiritual leaders, to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny.

Africa week is a good opportunity to celebrate pan Africanism, our shared heritage, the strength in our unity and fostering a spirit of hope and collaboration among Africans at home and abroad to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. Africa Week encourages Africans to embrace their diverse cultures, languages, religion and tradition, thus promoting a sense of belonging and community. The week provide an opportunity to educate both Africans and the global community about the continent, achievements, challenges and potential, emphasizing the need for political stability, economic development, and good governance. It encourages dialog among African nations to find solutions to common challenges and to work toward sustainable development and sustainable peace and to restore human dignity. Africa Week also offers an opportunity to raise awareness on a global scale about Africa's contribution to the world, and about the AU as a key player on the international scene, while showcasing the importance of international cooperation. Africa Week promotes a positive image of the continent, countering stereotypes and misconceptions.

I want to make a recommendation, therefore, for the Africa Week next year, to be organized in partnership with the African Union, Economic, Social and Cultural Council known as AU ECOSOC, established under the provision of Article 5 and 22 of the Africa union constitutive act. AU ECOSOC is a vehicle for building a strong partnership between governments and all segment of African civil society. The statute of ECOSOC adopted by the head of state and government at the third ordinary session of the assembly in July 2004 defines it as an advisory organ of the Africa Union, composed of different social and professional groups of the member states of the Africa Union.

Africa Week needs to include more youth engagement to inspire young people to take an active role in shaping Africa's future, to encourage them to participate in discussion and initiative that promotes growth and development. We can speed up progress by doing more to provide opportunities and hope to young people. More than three out of five Africans are under 35 years of age. Making the most of this tremendous asset means more investment in education, training, decent work and engaging young people in shaping their future.

Dear sisters and brothers, it's my pleasure to inform you that G20 Interfaith Forum, United Religions Initiative Africa inter religious council of Ethiopia, in partnership with the Africa Union Economic and Social Council and the AU citizen and diaspora directorate, have been working on organizing an interfaith conference for the last few years in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Welcoming the African Union as a G20 member, the G20 interfaith forum. the Africa inter-religious council of Ethiopia, in partnership With AU, organized the 2025 interfaith conference in Addis Ababa, the political capital city of Africa, on May 13 and 14, under the team of Africa's faith communities, advancing the Sustainable Development Goal, the Africa Union agenda 2063, and the South Africa's 2025 G20 process. The conference has brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including religious and traditional leaders, interfaith and faith-based organization, members of the diplomatic core policymakers, NGO, scholars and civil society, representatives from Africa and beyond. The President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was the guest of honor, and the new chairperson of the Africa Union delivered the welcoming remarks.

It is to be recalled that in 2023 the Inter Religious council of Ethiopia, URI Africa and the G20 Interfaith Forum made an appeal for the G20 to accept the African Union as member of G20. The organizers are delighted that in 2024, the AU was made a permanent member of the G20 as this gives to the continent an important voice on key global issues. The AU inclusions, ladies and gentlemen, in the G20 is historic, solidifying Africa's role in addressing critical global issues such as economic development, energy transition and sustainability. The African Union Commission has already participated in various G20 activity under the 2024 Brazilian

Presidency, which has prioritized advancing social inclusion and combating hunger and poverty, facilitating sustainable energy transition and reforming global governance institution.

This year, it is a good opportunity for Africa, as South Africa is the Presidency of the G20 Summit, and AU being a member of G20. The theme of the 2025 G20 Summit is solidarity, equality and sustainability. This team emphasized the need for global cooperation, ensuring fair opportunities for all and protecting the planet for this generation and generation yet to come. The African Union has important opportunities to shape the Global Agenda following its accession to the G20 with four consecutive G20 Presidencies from the global south and South Africa Presidency in 2025 the AU is well positioned to push for key reform that support African development. It is with this in mind that we are having this meeting in partnership with G20 Interfaith Forum.

As the G20 aims to address critical global challenge with a focus on inclusive economic growth, food security, sustainable development and climate action, the two days of conferences we had in Addis Ababa brought together the voice of different communities and the commitments of the Africa religious spiritual and traditional leaders, faith based and interfaith organization and other stakeholders with common position to advance this year's team and made practical recommendation that will help to bring meaningful change in people's life and practical impact in the preservation of environment. And this recommendation will be discussed during the G20 side event that will be organized by G20 in Cape Town in August, and the recommendation will be submitted to the G20.

Dear brothers and sisters, as you know, religion has become an important topic on the agenda of our world, and policy makers are becoming more aware of the role of religions in conflict prevention, peace building and reconciliation, encountering violent extremism and advancing development endeavor. Religious diplomacy becomes a very important approach to bring peace and resolve conflict in different parts of the world. By the way, religious diplomacy refers to the practice of leveraging religious belief institutions and leaders to foster dialog, promote peace and resolve conflict among different communities or nations. This form of diplomacy emphasizes the role of faith in international relations, utilizing the moral authority of religious figures and shared value of the faith tradition to build bridge between adversaries and encourage understanding. It's also with this spirit that the G20 was established in 2014 in addition to advancing the overall purpose of the G20.

It's high time to put a spotlight on helping followers of different religion and spiritual expression to understand the need of interfaith cooperation, to address the issue of environmental protection, climate change, security, peace, social justice, sustainable development, human dignity, countering violent extremism, radicalization, xenophobia and developing human relationships and economic growth for all, leaving no one behind. Too often, acts of violence are committed in the name of religion, though this has nothing to do with the basic teaching of religion. Therefore, religious and spiritual leaders of the world should provide a powerful example in their common rejection of violence, terrorism, and they strongly need to defend the universal value of respect for life and the dignity of all individuals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Different religions and spiritual leaders need to work together more than ever to promote a culture of peace, compassion, Ubuntu, respect for life and nonviolence. In short, religious, spiritual and traditional leaders must strongly affirm that violence can never be justified in the name of God. Religious and spiritual leaders need to be the voice for the voiceless.

It is high time for the faith community to assert that all major religions of the world teach the golden rule, which says, treat others the way you want to be treated. The golden rule has been affirmed in many religions and tradition, indigenous cultures and secular philosophies as a fundamental principle of life and the foundation upon which a global ethic is built. The teaching of the Golden Rule helps us to resist the force of division that spreads misunderstanding, disrespect and mistrust. The Golden Rule is the antidote to overcome hate-speech,

discrimination, injustice, xenophobia and racism. The golden rule is a very simple and yet profound action that can lead us from war to peace, from killing each other to peaceful coexistence, from disrespect to honoring each other, from hate to love, from despair to hope, from being selfish to live for the sake of others, and from holding grudges to forgiveness.

In this interconnected world, dear brothers and sisters, promoting the golden rule is the way to build harmony. We need to address pressing challenges and secure a better future for this generation and the generation yet to come. Each and every one of us needs to practice and exert all our efforts to be a peaceful person, as peace is not something that can be handed out. We need to acknowledge that peace is only possible in our respective countries, when each and every one of us starts to make peace within ourselves, our families and in our respective communities. Each needs to commit ourselves as best as we can to become nonviolent and make a personal pledge for peace and nonviolence.

Let us be an instrument of peace and a living example of the teaching of the Golden Rule and Ubuntu. Let us walk the talk by taking practical action. As Mahatma Ghandi said, we need to be the change we want to see in the world. Let us be a catalyst of positive change we want to see in the world. Together, we must harness our rich diversity, cultural heritage and innovative spirit to shape a continent that thrives on peace, opportunities and dignity for all based on the teaching of the golden rule. May peace prevail in our mind, in our heart, in our family, in our community, throughout Africa and throughout the world. May peace prevail on Earth. Thank you.



**The G20 Sherpa Track Coordinator Mr. Ben Joubert Speaking at the G20 Interfaith Forum
Africa Week**

I will need to speak to the colleagues who sent you that bio. It seems to me a little bit over the top. Let me start off to say this is the best part of my day, to be interacting with all those role players that support us in the G20 Presidency. Let me also thank the previous speaker Ambassador Mussie Hailu for focusing on Africa. As you know, Africa is the major part of our foreign policy focus. Of course, in Africa, we want peace, and we want security, and we want development. We want progress for all the people on the African continent. To achieve

that, we need peace and security. And then, of course, it's very evident the role that faith and religion and all of you in this room play in creating an environment that is safe and peaceful and therefore conducive to sustainable development. I'm very glad you pointed out that the African Union and its structures are also the focus of our foreign policy in the multilateral space. What happens in Africa is what we then take to the international community, like the UN and the multilateral systems that are out there. But that's not my job.

Today, I was requested to take you through the G20 year and what we do as the President of the G20. As you know, the G20 was established in 1999. In 2008 it moved to a summit level. Since 2008 it has been an event that is hosted throughout a year and then culminates in Summit more or less in November, because by one December, you should hand everything over to the next President of the G20. This year, as the Presidency of the G20, we culminate four years of developing countries holding the presidency of the G20. What we are doing this year is continuing the sustainable development agenda, continuing the emphasis on ambition for emerging markets, for developing countries and for those countries that are normally not in the bigger decision-making scheme of things. As you know, in 2022 it was in Indonesia. In 2023 it was in India. In 2024 Brazil, and this year, South Africa.

Next year, we start a new cycle of the G20 - this will come out in my few words today. So maybe just to set the global context, as you know, the world is facing severe and relentless challenges that are testing global human solidarity amongst nations. That was the bedrock of the formation of the UN. The UN was formed 80 years ago. One of the main issues that we as South Africa engage in, is how the world has changed in 80 years, and what are we doing to contribute to a reformed United Nations system? This is very important, we are not creating anything else or creating an alternative in a brick structure, for example, we are supporting the idea of a reformed and strengthened United Nations multilateral system that is truly inclusive of everyone on this planet. The geopolitical landscape is marked by escalating tensions, shifting alliances and very significant economic changes. The UN Secretary General said that the world is a place of impunity, of inequality and of deep uncertainty all fraying at the seams of the global order. Growing unilateralism, protectionism, inequality and under development takes place in this world today, and most countries therefore fail to meet their sustainable development goal targets. And as you know, those targets are due by 2030. The multilateral system of governance, including the multilateral trading system, is under severe stress. We also know that it is a time of lower overseas development assistance to many of these countries that need it so much. There are an increasing number of conflicts across our own continent, which is a threat to democracy and as we mentioned here peace and security and therefore also development. There's a renewed scramble for critical and transition minerals. Artificial intelligence is a critical and strategic tool, but also a potential threat to the work we want to do in terms of equality amongst people and nations. The impact of climate change and natural disasters are also impacting on developing countries. And that takes us to our G20 Presidency, and now I'm going to give you, in that context, a little bit of an overview.

As you know, our theme for this year of our Presidency in 2025 is solidarity, equality and sustainability. This theme is driven by our conviction that our challenges can only be resolved through cooperation, collaboration and partnership, albeit in a volatile and polarized geopolitical environment. We continue to seek sustainable and innovative solutions through dialog, collaboration and cooperation. I want to mention that Africa's G20 President, therefore stands firm in the belief that multilateral cooperation is not optional, it is imperative. Unilateral actions that determine that or that undermine a rule-based order should not be tolerated. This year will mark 80 years of the United Nations Presidency, but as I mentioned earlier on, the commitment of the G20 to strengthening multilateralism must then act in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Our Presidency provides us with an opportunity to ensure that the priorities of the global south find expression firmly on the agenda of the G20. South Africa will use this G20 platform to shine the spotlight

On the African Union agenda 2063. Again, I am just linking that up to my opening remarks on the importance of the African continent and the AU in South Africa's foreign policy.

Under its G20 Presidency theme, South Africa is advancing four priorities in the sherpa and finance tracks, and those priorities are strengthening disaster resilience and response, ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries, an extremely important issue also for Africa, and mobilizing finance for a just energy transition and harnessing. In the fourth place, harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Those are, as I said, the four priorities that we have in our year of presidency, but also, we have high level deliverables that come from this. These high-level deliverables are mainly in the form of task forces. The idea of a task force is that in the year of your presidency, you would execute everything that that task force needs to achieve. This helps us to make sure that going forward, we have achieved certain issues, and we don't leave it for the next presidency. The next presidency obviously will have its own high-level deliverables, its own issues that they want to promote in terms of how they see the geopolitical environment, or how they see some of the forces driving their priorities as a domestic priority. For us, the 15 working groups we find in the sherpa track, as well as the engagement groups, of which you are one, we would push the task forces to deliver this year. The working groups have a perpetual agenda that moves through the years, and they have certain issues that stay in that working group.

The three task forces that South Africa has established: the first task force speaks to inclusive economic growth, industrialization, employment and inequality. This task force obviously deals with something that is domestically very important to us, but actually to any G20 member, and that is the idea to have sustainable economic growth that is inclusive of all your role players in in the economy. The second one is a task force on food security. Needless to say, food security is extremely important to the developing global self, and especially to our continent. What we will see, for example, is in one of these task forces, two meetings we will take to an African country, where we will discuss how we achieve what we have set for ourselves in the second task force dealing with food security. Task force three deals with artificial intelligence, data governance, and innovation for sustainable development. All the good things that can come out of this new AI industry, if we can call it that. These issues are discussed in Task Force three. You can see from this how working groups contribute. For example, Task Force three would be supported by the work we are doing in the working group on digital economy, or the working group on innovation and research.

We are also concluding this very first cycle of about 18 years or 20 years of G20 so what we are doing as the President of the G20 this year is to establish a review of the G20 at 20. This review basically reflects on the work of the G20 over the years. This is a reflection on key achievements and the way forward. Not only achievements, but also to say what is it that we have committed to but have not achieved? This is a honest review in which all the G20 members participate, as well as the invited countries of our Presidency. It entails a high-level qualitative assessment of progress against the commitments and targets since 2008 when we actually became a G20 group at Summit level. The review will also look at ways to ensure that the G20 remains purpose driven and able to coordinate global responses to economic and financial crises.

Then there is a cost of capital review. I think this is one of the most important issues for many of us. South Africa is reviewing the cost of capital during its G20 Presidency. So just to reflect a little bit on this, there are two tracks in G20 it's the sherpa track, and the finance track. Now you will see that the finance track has a very set agenda, and they are a typical financial set of rules of engagement, and how a bank would deal with you. It's a very set structure in terms of how they deal with issues, and what they want to achieve. The sherpa track, on the other hand, is comprised of 15 working groups and all the engagement groups, that you are part of, sit in the Sherpa track. There you can see that naturally, the level of ambition is much higher. What we want to do is have this review in the Sherpa track. But we must also recognize or acknowledge the fact that the cost of capital is a

financial issue, so it is, at the moment, sitting in the financial track. There is a prominent panel that deals with these issues of cost of capital. The overarching goal of this initiative is to investigate the issues that impair the ability of middle-income countries to access sufficient, affordable, and predictable flows of capital and finance that will ensure that they have environmentally responsible and socially inclusive development plans.

As you know, colleagues, professors, and leaders, the cost of capital prevents many countries from delivering on the basic mandate. It is very well known that about 40% of the world's emerging and developing countries spend more money on debt service than they would spend on public health or education. In some countries, it is almost impossible to deliver on these services once you have served your debt. This is one issue that is extremely important to us and in Africa, we refer to that as the Africa premium. For the significant amount of the premium you pay for the debt, you must secure for your development and basic services. So then secondly, some of the other high-level deliverables that we have is an elevated compact with Africa. This is actually building on the German G20 Presidency, and it boils down to a broadened and elevated pact between private sector and Africa to develop and contribute to mobilizing domestic and international support through an improved investment framework for Africa. At the moment, 14 countries are now members of the compact with Africa, and that was after Zambia, as recently as April this year, joined the pact. To say to you, Ambassador, we will bring to Addis a meeting on the compact with Africa in August to look at how African countries can further benefit from this compact and how the private sector can support the initiative. So this is a high-level event that we plan for Addis. There's also one initiative on critical minerals. This initiative is basically recognizing the fact that Africa has 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including some of them that are critical, and 90% of the world's chromium and platinum. It also hosts the largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium. It's very evident that when it comes to critical minerals, we need to have a coordinated policy approach to that because what we really want to see at the end of the day is that beneficiation takes place at home. That speaks to many of our issues, to address domestic economic issues, or what we call in South Africa, the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality. This critical minerals initiative is very, very important, where we focus on three areas, namely, increased investment in exploration, increased beneficiation at home, and the integration of artisanal mining into mainstream economies.

Other priorities we are advancing this year - I'm slowly approaching the end of my presentation - but just to speak to some of the other priorities that we pursue in the working groups. As I mentioned, there are 15 working groups in the sherpa track. Some of the issues that we are championing and that are broader and cross cutting, would be the reform of the multilateral trading system and the international financial architecture. As I mentioned, if you look at something like the Bretton Woods institution, sorry, if I'm becoming repetitive, but if you look at the establishment of the World Bank, the IMF, those institutions are now 80 years old, so they need to reform to include the majority of people in the world. For us that reform is extremely important; we can't say that enough. Of course, we need to also address climate change. We need to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. I'm sorry that some of the major countries in the G20 would not like to hear this, but we ask you to support us in this regard. We cannot continue with the status quo. Let's just say that we cannot do that. We need to ensure that there's diversity, equity and inclusion, and that is also why our Presidency speaks about that issue of solidarity, equality, and then, of course, sustainability.

Exploring ways to increase the predictability, scale and flow of the finance climate is critical to enable the just transition and mitigation and adaptation efforts. We seem to forget that adaptation is for us also very important, and more so on the African continent. But of course, you know that transition means that we are in a sustainable fashion, going to transition to cleaner energy in a way that does not mean people lose their jobs, their livelihoods and the way that we need to support our communities. Whilst there are divergences on some of these issues, there is still overwhelming support for South Africa's priorities by G20 members.

Colleagues, I think this is a very important statement to make, because we need to know. We need to acknowledge the fact that the G20 is an organization that's been here for a good 20 years, but in Summit format, more than 17 years. This means that one country cannot influence the future of the G20. You might have, like any road that we travel on, a little bit of a speed bump, or a major speed bump, or in South Africa's case, we can all relate to a bottle. But that does not mean that the road stops. You know, the G20 will survive even if you have a hiccup. The G20 is much bigger than one or two countries, so we need to be focused, and we need to make sure that whatever we build this year as South Africa becomes a legacy. If that does not happen immediately after our Presidency, we will continue as South Africa to support those issues in the long run in the G20. That includes many of the issues that you find dear to yourself and to your organization.

Let me just speak a little bit about something that might be the most important thing for you, and that is the fact that we are hosting a people centered, inclusive G20. We are presiding over a G20 that is people centered and inclusive. What we are doing here today is part of this approach. We are engaging as far as possible, everyone that is part of the G20 ecosystem, if we can call it that. Our Presidency is not only about promoting working groups and the finance track, it's also about promoting the work that you are doing and that engagement groups are doing. This is not new. This should not be new to South Africans, because that's basically the approach we have to our democracy, you know, a fully inclusive approach. If there's one country that can survive this type of geopolitical challenges that we see today, it is South Africa. The majority of the G20 members still support what South Africa is doing today; we're not giving up. We're not giving up and saying, "Okay, let this thing die", or "let's all go back to the finance track and let everything in engagement groups die." We're not going to do that. We are going to stay ambitious. And for us, we are still six months away from Summit. Six months is a very long time; we are driven by the by the idea that every working group will have an agreed ministerial statement.

We are also driven by the idea that we will host a G20 Social Summit. Now, as you know, that idea started last year with Brazil. Brazil and South Africa are very much like minded so this year we will host a G20 Social Summit. The G20 Social Summit is also bigger than the Leader's Summit in terms of participation, in terms of numbers. We are very committed to that event, and we are even more committed to the build up to that event that is basically supporting all the engagement groups to get to that stage where on the 18th of November, we start hosting the G20 Social Summit. Working on the engagement groups and the Social Summit are critical to ensuring that the G20 stays relevant and focused on democratic, inclusive and comprehensively supporting everything that is important, not only to government, but also to the people in the widest sense possible; not only in South Africa, but also in all the G20 members. There are nine countries invited. There are 24 international organizations invited. This element for us is therefore extremely important, and we will continue to support the processes that will lead us to that. One example of such support is when we do go into the third chapter meeting, all the sherpas of the G20 will have an engagement with engagement groups.

We are very much aware of what you are doing, and we recognize the importance thereof, and we want to take you along in the journey, because this is a whole of the South Africa approach. But more than that, it's an approach that transcends boundaries in terms of the membership of your organizations and of the G20

Let me then conclude by just mentioning some of the key opportunities. We feel that the G20 is a good opportunity to build on the successes of multilateralism through solidarity, and to ensure that a rules based multilateral system stays in place. This would, of course, mean the very ambitious goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Of course, this will also mean that we have meaningful outcomes in the International Conference on Finance for Development that will take place in Spain towards the end of June and the 30th Conference of Parties for the COP the United Nations Convention on Climate Change. We feel there is the confluence of several high-level events that can support not only our G20 Presidency, but also the agenda of the Global South. And that is basically Finance for Development in Spain. Then later in the year, the COP 30 in

the jungle in Brazil, and then our own G20 Summit presided over by a developing country like South Africa. To situate inequalities at the heart of economic policy making, we need to recognize the disparities in wealth and development within and between our countries. We need to further work on debt relief initiatives. We need to leverage private sector investment and ensure that multilateral development banks play a meaningful role. We need to advance sustainable solutions, and we ask you to support us in that. And we need to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. And this is where the idea of just transition also comes in.

Let me stop there and just thank you for the opportunity to speak here today and to say to you that we have the best of intentions to engage in this fashion, from the government side, from the Presidency of the G20 side. We're not a very big team. Sometimes it's not always possible to have this type of engagement. And as I mentioned earlier, it's actually the best part of the day to do this type of engagement with you, and I'm really thankful for the invitation. Oh, my colleague Tiego has just walked in. I feel much better now with her joining us because she's our engagement group specialist. On that note, colleagues and professors and Excellencies in the room, thank you. Thank you very much for this opportunity.



Department of International Relations and Cooperation Representative Ms Tiego Mothlamme Speaking at the G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week

It's my pleasure to be here today to interact with you regarding the Social Summit that will be convened under South Africa's Presidency of the G20. I believe my colleague, Mister Ben Joubert has shared with you an overview of the G20 Presidency for South Africa. And now you have an idea of the evolution of the G20, where this grouping comes from, how it came about. From a grouping of Ministers of Finance, to leaders level, up to the very last Presidency of the G20 The first cycle, where South Africa will be presiding over the last presidency in the first cycle, and then the second cycle will commence.

The idea of the Social Summit, excellencies and colleagues, was conceived by the Federal Republic of Brazil when they were overseeing the Presidency of the G20 in 2024. Brazil was the President of the G20 before handing it over to South Africa last year, so they came up with the idea of a Social Summit. A Social Summit is

but a unique project that brings about legacy of the G20 and that takes the G20 to the people. I'm sure Mr. Joubert has shared with you the concept behind our presidency and our theme.

Now looking into the theme, when in the early stages of the planning the G20, we then decided that it is important as a developing country and as a fourth presidency under the developing South, the developing nations of the G20. It first started with Indonesia in 2022, went on to India in 2023, then Brazil took over in 2024 and South Africa is now the current chair of the G20 or the current president of the G20 in 2025. The four previous presidencies of the G20 have been from emerging markets or developing nations. So as a result, it's now obvious that development would be at the heart, taking it to the people - solidarity, equality and sustainability. It then was incumbent upon us to follow in the footsteps of Brazil, to convene a Social Summit.

Under the Brazilian presidency, the Social Summit meant stretching it further than the 13 engagement groups, the traditional engagement groups that are recognized by the G20. How the setup works is that you've got 13 engagement groups that are traditionally recognized by the G20. That would be your Business 20, your Labor 20, your Youth 20, your Civil 20, Women 20 and the others. There's a list that goes up to 13. When you look at this list, however, it's confined according to sectors, but it doesn't necessarily mean the work that is done outside the 13 engagement groups that are traditionally recognized by the G20 is not recognized. How Brazil saw it is that there is also a lot of work that's done outside these 13 engagement groups. There's Interfaith 20, there's Values 20, there's G20 Favelas under the Brazilian Presidency, which under our presidency would be then, as announced by our president, Township 20. What that means then is that we need space to also allow these other engagement groups, informal engagement groups. We refer to them as a presidency and recognize that they do very important work. We need space to allow them as well to showcase the work that they do to contribute to the presidency.

The Social Summit is one such platform. This is a platform that brings together, that takes the G20 to the people. It's a platform that will work to take the Presidency to the G20. What is the legacy that we are trying to establish through the G20? How are we going to do that? And are we in communication with our people? Yes, we are because we plan to take this platform that's called the Social Summit, to bring all the stakeholders together and say, how do we move about going forward?

What is the legacy regarding our presidency? I believe the Social Summit offers a reflection on us as a country to reflect on the state of affairs and to come up with solutions, to be in dialog within the confines of the G20 to say, what is the state of affairs in our country? What are the main issues? I can think of migration. I can think of healthcare and employment. I can think of the state of the economy, and I can think about social relations over and above.

These are some of the issues that will bring all stakeholders under the umbrella of the Social 20, we are not going to be selective. We are going to make a call out in July. There was an initial meeting at the presidency last week convened by the Office of the Presidents, where we were planning for the Social Summit. How do we go about? Where will this be hosted, and in what format or in what fashion? There will be a call out to all stakeholders, all organization across sectors, wherever be it youth, whether be it women, whether it be children. There will be a call out for all organizations that do work within the confines of the G20, even outside the confines of the G20. Those organizations, or those groupings, those community service groupings, that have a stake or would like to contribute to the social 20, there will be a call out for them to come together. And then we will propose and say, here is a framework that we have designed for the hosting of the social Summit. What is your take in it? What would you like to see at the end?

We're hoping that the Social Summit will produce a declaration that will then be handed over at the Leader's Summit. But prior to that, there needs to be a lot of work that has to happen on the ground. We will also be bringing on board the 13 engagement groups, as well as the informal engagement groups, your V20 or Interfaith 20, Disability 20, all those informal groupings will also be invited as stakeholders in the Social Summit.

So as of now, we are hoping that as people gain insight about the Social Summit, they are able to make a distinction between the Social Summit and the Leader's Summit, and also the areas of convergence and divergence between the two. There's more areas of convergence between the Leaders Summit, with an understanding that within the G20 process, or the mechanism, that's the Sherpa track, there's the finance track, there's the social track, which is the engagement groups, and then on top of that, we are now hosting a Social Summit. The President of the country has been requested, via DIRCO and the presidency, to nominate the conveners of the Social Summit. Under the Brazilian presidency, the convener of the Social Summit was in the Office of President Lula. We are following the same approach, of course, adding our African, you know, African spice to it, if I put it that way, for lack of a better word. If I say, we are adding our own African flavor to that.

The convener of the social summit, the final decision rests with the President. We've made recommendations to President [Ramaphosa] to say, these are the people that we feel from the government side, there must be a convener. From the civil society side, there must be a convener. We've put up names for the President to consider. However, I need to inform the collective here that the final decision will be by President Ramaphosa, who will tell us who will convene the Social Summit.

Once we have our convener, and we are hoping for that in the next week or two, we will have our conveners formally announced, and we can then work on the call out, where we will have a meeting, a community meeting, or a meeting of all stakeholders, where we will invite all stakeholders across the board to come together and share with us insight of what they envisage in terms of the Social 20. Our understanding is the outcome of the Social 20, the Social Summit will be more practical. It would be the kind of outcome where we can say, here are legacy projects that we can identify that would then be linked to the outcome of our G20 Presidency.

The planning for the Social Summit is still at beginning stages. However, we foresee a mechanism in our framework document that we are working on, and once it's finalized and approved, I will share it with the organizers of today's roundtable, then they can distribute it to the rest of the collective. We foresee an organizing committee, that would be the goal in between the Presidency, DIRCO and civil society. As for the organizing committee, the members will be nominated from civil society. There would be one or two representatives from government, from both departments, DIRCO and presidency. But we're envisioning that the majority of the stakeholders in the organizing committee would be more civil society. I need to emphasize that our role as government is not to actually immerse ourselves in the Social Summit, but to make sure that we oversee the planning and let civil society and the people of South Africa actually be the main stakeholders and the main runners of the show.

As of now, we are trying to establish exactly where we will host the Social Summit. Under the Brazilian Presidency, they chose a setting where everyone was able to come together, and for three days, they were able to showcase their work. There was also a cultural element, and there was also dialog, as well as at the end, there was a press release where President Lula was able to announce the outcome of the Social Summit under the Brazilian Presidency. We have followed the same approach under the planning for the South Africa Social

Summit. It will be the dates that we have identified as 18 to 20 November. We are hopeful that we can host the Social Summit at the Pretoria Show Grounds here in Pretoria; however, it's not final. As I indicated, it's the planning phase of the Social Summit. We are in contact with city of Tshwane to see if the show grounds in Pretoria West would be a suitable venue for us to host the Social Summit.

Our minister and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Ronald Lamola has indicated that since the summit itself, the Leader's Summit will be hosted in Nasrec in Johannesburg, it would make sense to have the Social Summit also hosted in Pretoria. So the City of Tshwane and the City of Johannesburg are the conveners of the Urban 2, so it makes sense that between the two of them, we spread the two major activities, which is the Leader Summit, which will go to the City of Johannesburg in Nasrec and then the Social Summit, then would go to the City of Tshwane, if we agree on the on hosting at the show grounds.

We emphasize that for three days, all the stakeholders will come together. We will have a program that is designed according to the theme of the presidency, and that speaks to the work that all the stakeholders do, including formal, traditional engagement groups and informal ones. By November, all the traditional engagement groups and the informal engagement groups would have had hosted their summits, so they would have an outcome as the work that they do currently will have culminated, whether it's Women 20, whether it's Business 20. Most of the engagement groups are starting to host their midterm conferences, and then they're moving towards the third quarter of the year. I know that at the time the Social Summit is hosted, you shall have had your Summit and you will have an outcome as an engagement group of what is going on and how your work actually culminated.

At the time that the Social Summit is hosted, we will have an outcome from all the engagement groups regarding the work that they've done for the year. So that outcome will also form part and parcel of the Social Summit. All the engagement groups, all the stakeholders, community service organizations, individuals will have a chance to go into dialog together and to showcase the work that they've done out of the dialog, out of the communication. There will be a final communique for the Social Summit. Legacy Projects will be identified, and all the legacy process and the final communique will then be handed over to the leaders and it will be presented at the Leader's Summit.

At this point in time, planning phases are still starting, but what I can inform the collective is that in July, there will be a call out for all the organizations and all interested individuals. At that time, we are hopeful that the call out will be presided over by the conveners of the Social Summit, where we will call together all the organizations, all the stakeholders, and inform them officially, this is South Africa launching the hosting of the Social Summit. We will then try to get the buy in of all stakeholders and get ideas as to how they embrace this process to unfold.

At that time, what I can indicate to the collective is that we have the contact details of almost everyone in the room. We will also liaise with Inez to get more of those that we wouldn't have gotten. We will get them, and the call out will be announced on all media platforms, including the SABC social media platforms. We will try to make sure that it reaches as many South Africans as possible, and ensure that the information goes out there on time, so that people can be able to participate and be part of this important milestone where the conveners of the Social Summit will be informing the population of South Africa and the citizens of this country about this important Social Summit that will be hosted by the President to engage the people of South Africa and to involve them in the G20 process. Thank you.

Solly Moeng at the G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week

Summary of Solly Moeng's comments:

In this compelling address, the speaker emphasizes the importance of accountability in addressing corruption within South Africa. Clarifying that their critique targets individuals within government rather than the institution itself, the speaker rejects deflection tactics that compare local corruption to international cases. They argue that South Africans have the power and responsibility to hold their own leaders accountable, regardless of global injustices. Acknowledging the role of multinational corporations in enabling corruption, the speaker stresses the need for domestic action and moral leadership. They call for a culture of self-respect and integrity, urging citizens to lead by example and demonstrate to the world how corruption should be confronted.

Text:

About corruption here. I never said this government corruption. I said there are individuals in government who are corrupt. And your response is no different from someone saying, Why should we arrest Omar Al Bashir because George Bush is walking around it. It's a poor response. I'm sorry to say that to you. There are things that we have control of in life. There are things we have no control of. We, the people of South Africa, can control, have control over who gets into government in this country, where the resources are trying, we can't say, because Putin is stealing money there. Why should we talk about the stealing of money here? And I also know that many of these people implicated in corruption, all forms of corruption, including state capture, worked with big companies. The fact that I mentioned them doesn't mean I don't know about the McKenzies and all these other big companies that are involved. There's some, many of which come from America, Europe and elsewhere. But I have no control over those companies, and I hope those people get arrested one day. But we have control over the people here. We can't keep defending people because they are our people and out there simply because others out there are getting away with knowledge. Let's lead to lead. Let the world say this is how corruption is dealt with in South Africa. Instead of saying, you're not corrupt, arresting your arrest, you're corrupt, therefore we're not going to arrest us. I'm sorry. We are our worst enemies, and there's no way that we can expect the whole world to love us, to respect us, if we don't show respect to ourselves, if we don't love ourselves, it's a simple thing. We must show love here and the world must see how we love ourselves and our people. Thank you.

Michael Swain Co-Chair IF20 at the G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week

Thank you everybody for being here. I think one of the privileges that we have is that this particular year, South Africa has the chair, and of course, that means that we as South Africans have an amazing, wonderful opportunity to really help to shape what is getting discussed. The beauty of G20 is that there is obviously continuity. There is the hand off from country to country, but the themes remain, and we have the opportunity to give it that unique flavor. To all the 20s who are here this, I think this is a tremendous opportunity for us to also hear one another, to collaborate together and to work towards a very powerful and positive output for justice, so thank you so much for your presence. Thank you again for this continuity and the leadership that you bring, and for taking the time to be with us. We appreciate you. I'm going to just give you a little brief about what the G20 Interfaith forum is going to be looking at and focusing on. As has been mentioned, this particular initiative has been going for across 10 years, gathering of the G20 Interfaith Forum. And it's growing year after year, and very significantly. It focuses on certain parts of G20 areas. And it is also increasingly developing much of the best practices, best thinking, spotlighting specifics, because the integrated communities are doing incredible work

throughout the world; but in South Africa, we can certainly hold our heads up. I think and know that we are also making a tremendous difference as faith communities to social society in multiple different areas. Of course, this does serve as a dynamic global platform where we can actually give expression and give the presentations and provide the opportunities for voices to be heard, and for a tremendous level of inclusivity that we all obviously support and encourage. What we're going to be doing is to go through some of the things that you do that have helped us as well, and the take away from your work so we can improve further. We're obviously looking at the links between the economic element and religious and religious freedom through informed and scholarly discussion. There's a lot of work and it is measurable, which is, I think, a very powerful thing to value. But when religious freedom flourishes, economies flourish, and societies flourish. You can actually see there are measurable test nations where they have not had necessarily placed a big focus on religious freedom, and when that focus comes, everybody begin to respect it and to implement it. The nation, the economy, multiple aspects from how women and children are treated, increase measurably, and that's very powerful feedback. Nations with strong religious freedom see improved economic and social conditions, including better treatment of women and children.



The 20s at the G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week: (Left to Right) Sandile Makasi- Vice Chair IF20 Local Organizing Committee, Maniraj Sukdaven-Co Chair IF20 Co-Chair Local Organizing Committee, Tabea Tshesane-Values 20 Co-Chair, Nhlanhla Ndlovu-Civil 20 Secretariat Head, Mandisa Dyantyi- Oxfam South Africa

Summary: The meeting introduced key representatives from various G20 streams, focusing on their roles and initiatives. Michael Swain highlighted the G20 interfaith forum's 10-year history and its focus on economic, social, and cultural policies. Tabia from V20 discussed their mandate, emphasizing values like dignity, Ubuntu, integrity, and ethical governance, aiming to create a national values charter. Nhlanhla from C20 detailed their governance structures, working groups, and inclusivity efforts, including representation of diverse groups. The discussions underscored the importance of values, equity, and inclusivity in addressing global challenges.

Speaker Summary – Maniraj Sukdaven, Co-Chair IF20

Maniraj Sukdaven from Interfaith 20 (IF20) highlighted the critical role of faith in addressing deep-rooted societal challenges such as debt, poverty, hunger, and violence—particularly in the African context.

Emphasizing that many of these issues are intertwined with religious and ethical dimensions. Maniraj underscored IF20's mission to explore how faith can guide responses to these crises. By fostering dialogue and understanding across religious communities. IF20 seeks to confront the moral and spiritual failures that contribute to inequality and conflict, and to promote peace, justice, and human dignity.

Speaker Summary – Tabea, Values 20 (V20) Representative

Tabea, co-chair of Values 20 (V20), shared the group's mission to embed core human values into global policy through the G20 process. With a network of over 1,600 contributors, V20 is developing a values-based communique aligned with the G20 themes of sustainability, equality, and solidarity. Current guiding values include dignity, Ubuntu, integrity, ethical governance, agency, accountability, and equity—intended as conversation starters for a co-created, inclusive framework. Beyond policy, V20 is advancing a long-term advocacy initiative to develop a National Values Charter in South Africa. Tabea emphasized collaboration with other G20 engagement groups and announced an upcoming V20 Summit in Cape Town, aimed at finalizing an action plan to embed values across all sectors of society.

Speaker Summary – Nhlanhla Ndlovu Civil 20 (C20) Representative

Nhlanhla outlined the structure and vision of the Civil 20's engagement in South Africa's G20 presidency. Emphasizing inclusivity and African leadership, they described the establishment of governance structures, including an advisory committee, working group facilitators, and a diverse leadership team. The C20 has aligned its working groups with key themes—solidarity, equality, and sustainability—covering areas such as education, health, digital economies, climate justice, food security, and gender equity. Each working group is co-led by South African and African facilitators to ensure a truly continental perspective. With over 1,600 civil society organizations engaged globally, the C20 is committed to representing marginalized voices, including women, rural communities, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ groups, in shaping G20 policy discussions.

Speaker Summary – Mandisa Dyantyi, Oxfam South Africa

Mandisa of Oxfam South Africa emphasized the organization's mission to elevate the voices of those pushed to the margins—particularly working-class women, small-scale farmers, and mining-impacted communities. She shared plans for G20 roadshows in Mthatha and East London, focusing on land access and the lived realities of women farmers. Highlighting the need for a people-centered G20, she called for inclusive dialogue on inequality, tax justice, and development. Mandisa also affirmed Oxfam's commitment to building solidarity across civil society and expressed readiness to partner with other G20 engagement groups—including the C20, W20, V20, and Youth 20—to ensure no one is left behind in shaping global policy.

Action Items

- Establish the governance structure for the C20, including the chairperson, deputy chairs, and Sherpas.
- Organize the C20 working groups aligned with the government's working groups, with South African and African co-hosts.
- Expand the C20 database of participating organizations, aiming for inclusive representation.
- Finalize the V20 communique document and action plan by June.
- Engage with various stakeholders, including youth and financial sustainability groups, to embed values in societal structures.
- Host a V20 summit in October in Cape Town to gather input on the values document and action plan.

Q&A Session with the 20's Panel

During the Q&A session, the panel and participants discussed the outcomes and accessibility of reports from the C20, V20, and Oxfam. Oxfam emphasized fighting poverty and economic inequality, questioning the control of global wealth by a few families. The conversation highlighted the need for civic education, fighting corruption, and wealth redistribution. The importance of Ubuntu and traditional leaders was debated. The V20 initiative aims to align efforts, with a focus on creating an enabling environment for investment and addressing historical theft. The IF20 platform aims to engage 90% of the African population, particularly through religious and spiritual leaders, to influence policy and foster solidarity.

Action Items

- Publish the completed work of the C20 on the website www.values20.org
- Engage more with traditional leaders, royal leaders, and African spiritual leaders to involve them in the process
- Develop materials and programs for civic education at the community level, while also incorporating the lived experiences of people
- Utilize the C20 platform to reorganize and build relationships across the African continent, and shape positions that could lead to solidarity in action
- Encourage participants to visit the G20.org website to learn more about the IF20 and its five priority areas





G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week African Traditional Religious Belief Systems and Spirituality: Katherine Marshall, Nicholas Miller, Pieter Francois, and Sogol Jafarzadeh

Speaker Summary – Professor Katherine Marshall, Vice President; Chair, Policy and Networking Committee IF20

Dr. Katherine Marshall, representing the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20), opened the symposium by welcoming attendees and highlighting the forum’s mission to unite religiously linked organizations in addressing global challenges. Since its founding during the 2014 Australian G20 Presidency, the IF20 has convened annually to align faith-based perspectives with the G20 agenda. For 2025, under South Africa’s presidency, the forum is focusing on five key priorities: ending hunger and poverty, addressing unsustainable debt, enhancing disaster preparedness in the face of climate change, protecting vulnerable populations such as children and victims of trafficking, and promoting social cohesion through education and healthcare. Emphasizing the G20 themes of solidarity, equality, and sustainability, Dr. Marshall underscored the unique moral and practical contributions of religious communities to global governance.

Speaker Summary – Doctor Nicholas Miller, Subcommittee Co- Chair of IF20 for Freedom of Religion FoRB

Nicholas Miller discussed the vital contributions of religious communities to global public policy, particularly in an increasingly secular world. He outlined three key ways faith groups can engage: first, by ensuring policies respect religious freedom (“Don’t tread on me”); second, by partnering with governments to communicate shared values, especially in areas like public health; and third, by contributing unique moral insights—such as stewardship in environmental policy—that enrich secular discourse. Miller also addressed the distinct challenges faced by indigenous and traditional peoples in the context of religious freedom. Unlike voluntary religious associations, these communities often have deep, inseparable ties to land, culture, and civil structures, making religious identity more complex and intertwined with communal life. He emphasized the need for special consideration of these dynamics in policy-making, recognizing that religious freedom in such contexts involves both individual and collective rights. His remarks underscored the importance of inclusive, respectful engagement with diverse religious and cultural traditions in shaping equitable and effective global governance.

Speaker Summary – Professor Pieter Francois, Subcommittee Co- Chair of IF20 for Freedom of Religion FoRB

Pieter Francois introduced a collaborative session aimed at refining international guidelines that bridge the individual right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) with the collective rights of indigenous and traditional

communities. He outlined the session's structure with an initial discussion followed by a detailed, line-by-line review of the draft document ("Guidelines for Assessing the Intersection of the Rights of Indigenous and Traditional Peoples, Group Rights, and Freedom of Religion or Belief"). Francois emphasized the complexity of balancing universal human rights with culturally specific realities, noting that FoRB, while long established in international law, remains one of the more contested and misunderstood rights. Drawing from experiences in Brazil, he illustrated how definitions of "indigenous" and "traditional" peoples vary significantly by region, complicating efforts to create inclusive, actionable guidelines.

Speaker Summary – Sogol Jafarzadeh, UN and Government Relations Coordinator, Gender and Capacity Building Focal Point for Africa, United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment, and Health.

In her presentation, Sogol highlighted the critical role of indigenous peoples in environmental policies, noting that indigenous communities manage 25% of the world's land surface, 37% of protected areas, and 36% of intact forest lands. She emphasized how the UN has increasingly recognized indigenous peoples' contributions to climate action, particularly through platforms like the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Colombia, Bucharest, and Riyadh. Her key message was that indigenous communities are essential partners in addressing global challenges like climate change, food security, and environmental conservation, bringing unique traditional knowledge and a close connection to natural resources that can inform more effective global strategies.

Group Discussion following the Speakers

Miller and Francios then invited Forum participants to offer critical feedback on the document's scope, clarity, and applicability to South Africa's diverse contexts, stressing the importance of surfacing a wide range of perspectives to inform a nuanced and representative final product. The meeting discussed the integration of Ubuntu principles into education and the need for knowledge sharing and language preservation among African indigenous groups. Participants emphasized the importance of recognizing and supporting traditional and indigenous communities, including their unique cultural practices and languages. Concerns were raised about the marginalization of these groups despite their numerical majority and the need for state investment in their development. The conversation also highlighted the challenges of balancing group rights with individual rights and the importance of addressing economic and social inequalities to ensure the full realization of religious freedom and other freedoms.

The discussion revealed complex perspectives on defining indigenous and traditional peoples, particularly in the African context. Participants challenged the terminology, with some arguing that in Africa, most groups could be considered indigenous, making the distinction problematic. The speakers debated whether to use terms like "indigenous," "traditional," or "group rights," with a preference emerging for "community rights" that better reflects the Ubuntu philosophy of collective identity. Key concerns included avoiding colonial-era categorizations, recognizing the economic marginalization of majority populations, and creating a framework that respects cultural practices while promoting unity. The group emphasized the need for a nuanced approach that goes beyond labels, focusing instead on preserving cultural heritage, language, and spiritual practices across different African communities.

Insights from today's discussions will be taken back to the document drafting committee, where they will be considered to help shape a more inclusive and effective proposal for the G20.



G20 Interfaith Forum Africa Week: The Youth's Voice in Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability Moderators – Judith Mahlangu, The Rising Generation, Sandile Makasi- Vice Chair IF20 Local Organizing Committee

Moderators Judith Mahlangu and Sandile Makasi

The themes are solidarity, equality and sustainability and so what we've done, we've asked three youth to come and share with us according to their perspective, what these individual themes mean. So first up, we'll have another Sandile share on solidarity. Then we will invite Babalawa to talk about equality, and then we'll hear from the Gaby to talk about sustainability.

A Youth Perspective on Solidarity – Sandile Hlayisi

The multifaceted nature of solidarity was highlighted, emphasizing the roles of personal responsibility, legal frameworks, and collective action. Speakers highlighted the importance of individual accountability and the active participation of youth in decision-making processes, particularly in holding leaders accountable. Personal narratives of religious persecution illustrated the need for empathy, respect for diverse beliefs, and the protection of the right to think freely without fear. Broader societal challenges such as unemployment and crime were addressed through calls for shared understanding and concrete, collaborative solutions. Additionally, the role of law was explored as a tool for integration and rehabilitation, advocating for a shift from punitive measures to supportive legal frameworks that help marginalized individuals become productive members of society. Together, these insights painted a comprehensive picture of solidarity rooted in empathy, action, and inclusive legal and social systems.

A Youth Perspective on Equality – Babalwa Ngcongolo

Babalwa emphasized the importance of fostering equality through empathy, opportunity, and meaningful dialogue. A key theme was the value of intergenerational conversations to bridge divides between youth and

older generations, fostering mutual understanding and shared purpose. The discussions also highlighted the persistent challenges faced by marginalized communities and the need to ensure equal access to opportunities. Compassion and understanding were identified as essential drivers of equality, encouraging a shift in mindset that prioritizes real-world outcomes and opportunities over reliance on legal frameworks alone. This holistic approach calls for both systemic change and personal commitment to building a more equitable society.

A Youth Perspective on Sustainability - Gabriella Garber Cohen

Gabriella highlighted the critical role of sustainability and the shared responsibility across generations to address future challenges. Emphasis was placed on the importance of youth engagement in shaping sustainable communities, with a call for young people to take initiative and drive positive change. At the same time, the wisdom and experiences of elders were recognized as invaluable resources that can guide and inform these efforts. The discussions also stressed the need to integrate sustainability into all areas of study and professional practice, ensuring that environmental and social responsibility become foundational principles in building a resilient and equitable future.

Recommendations from Focus Group Sessions

The youth were divided into two groups, and each group was given 60 minutes to review the G20 themes of Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability, then to identify the global priorities the IF20 needs to consider for their priority recommendations, focusing on actionable solutions. The two groups then returned to report. And present their recommendations. Their reports emphasized the urgent need for sustainability, intergenerational collaboration, and inclusive global policymaking. Discussions highlighted the importance of empowering youth to take responsibility for their communities and to focus on long-term challenges, while also valuing the wisdom and experiences of older generations. Sustainability was identified as a principle that should be integrated across all fields of study and practice. Participants were encouraged to consider the voices of youth not present in the room and to develop globally relevant, actionable recommendations. The group discussions focused on crafting practical solutions to global problems, with an emphasis on critical thinking and collaboration. Final remarks reinforced the significance of participants' contributions, urging them to think beyond local contexts and recognize the potential global impact of their ideas. The next steps outlined a path forward for turning these insights into meaningful action. The future is in good hands!