

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCING AFRICA'S CLIMATE AGENDA AT THE G20



An official side event  
of the  
Africa Climate Summit

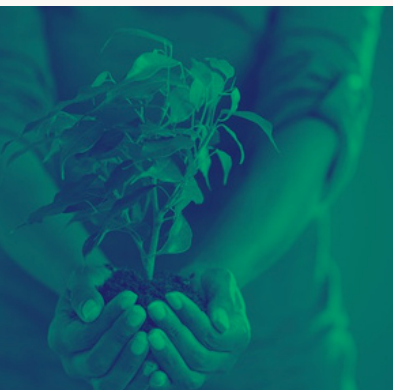
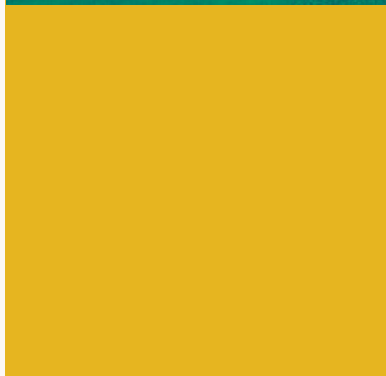
9 SEPTEMBER 2025  
ADDIS ABABA CONVENTION  
CENTRE, ETHIOPIA, ROOM F3

Presented by

DEMOCRACY  
WORKS  
FOUNDATION.

F20

A transformation that leaves no one behind.



# AFRICA



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DEMOCRACY  
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FOUNDATION.

**ENGAGE WITH OUR PANEL OF SPEAKERS  
ON MENTIMETER!**

**Share your questions and post your  
comments in real time.**



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**Join us in shaping a democratic and just  
future!**







# CONTEXT

South Africa is the first African country to host the G20 Presidency. As a result, the country's G20 leadership has made it abundantly clear that its presidency will focus not only on furthering national priorities, but that it will also centre African interests.

This follows the African Union's (AU) formal admission to the G20, which marked a significant step toward strengthening Africa's voice in global governance. Under the 2024 Brazilian G20 Presidency, which prioritised social inclusion, energy access, and governance reform, the AU actively participated in key G20 activities, signalling a new phase of continental engagement in shaping global policy. Both the G20's sherpa and finance tracks have committed to deepening and consolidating previous climate and sustainability commitments as well as presenting several new agendas. The deliberations of dedicated working groups on Environment and Climate Sustainability, Energy Transitions, Development, and Disaster Risk Reduction are steadily pushing ahead on their progressive agendas. This is also true for a number of official engagement groups who have recognised climate and sustainability action areas through the formation of special task forces dedicated to Climate justice and the environment (W20), Energy mix and just transitions (B20), Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (Y20), and Accelerating Climate Action and the Just Energy Transition, and several of these engagement groups have worked with F20 to develop a joint communique on climate and energy democracy in Africa.





# EVENT OVERVIEW

As Official Development Assistance (ODA) declines and multilateral finance remains slow to respond to the pace and scale of the climate crisis, philanthropic actors are emerging as key enablers of climate ambition across the continent. Their growing role extends beyond funding and they often support experimentation, participatory governance models, and integrated climate-development approaches that national and international financing often overlooks. The 2025 African Climate Summit presents a critical moment to reposition climate finance as an enabler of climate and energy democracy, particularly in the face of deepening inequality, governance deficits, and intersecting crises of democracy backsliding and climate impacts.

To explore Africa's role in the G20 and how it might support or hinder investments to unlock finance for inclusive, democratic, and just climate transitions.

## OBJECTIVE 2

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## OBJECTIVE 1

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To explore new avenues for African leadership at international platforms such as the G20, and how this can strengthen governance, justice, and rights in international climate change investments and decision-making.







# SESSION FORMAT

Informed by key developments emerging from the South African G20 Presidency, this session explores the opportunities and challenges presented by the African Union's G20 membership in advancing climate and energy democracy on the continent and beyond.

This session will feature a panel-style discussion bringing together voices from philanthropies, representatives from national governments, and regional bodies to explore the African Union's evolving role within the G20. Together we will unpack the opportunities and potential challenges that AU membership to the G20 presents for advancing African climate agendas on the global stage.



A transformation that leaves no one behind.

### Welcome by F20 Secretary General

To support a coordinated commitment to strengthening climate and energy democracy on the continent, several G20 engagement groups including Women20, Business20, Youth20, and Urban20, have come together to develop a joint communiqué to G20 leaders. Foundations20 Chair, Raisa Cole will share some of the key messaging from the communiqué.

### Presentation of Engagement Group Joint Communiqué

To support a coordinated commitment to strengthening climate and energy democracy on the continent, several G20 engagement groups including Women20, Business20, Youth20, and Urban20, have come together to develop a joint communiqué to G20 leaders. Foundations20 Chair, Raisa Cole will share some of the key messaging from the communiqué.

### Panel Discussion

This session will feature a panel-style discussion bringing together voices from both established and emerging African philanthropies, representatives from South Africa's G20 Presidency, and key African Union stakeholders involved in G20 processes. Together, they will explore the African Union's evolving role within the G20 and unpack the opportunities, and potential challenges, this presents for advancing African climate agendas on the global stage.

# MEET THE PANEL OF SPEAKERS



## ZARINA MOOLLA

Zarina Moolla serves as Head of Climate Action Implementation in Africa, in C40's Regions & Mayoral Engagement Team. In this role she works with seven African cities to implement and mainstream climate action into city policies, plans and processes. Prior to this, Zarina worked as a senior manager for the Climate Action Planning programme in Africa and the City Adviser to Durban, where she supported the City to develop their Climate Action Plan.

## JOHN ASAFU-ADJAYE

John Asafu-Adjaye has been a Resident Senior Fellow at the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) since 2018. At ACET, John leads the research program on agriculture and climate change. He also provides guidance to African policymakers and economic actors to support the implementation of the transformation agenda. He has an extensive track record in research and consultancy in agricultural economics, energy economics, climate change, and economic development in a variety of countries and regions.



## BLESSING MANALE

Blessing Manale is the Head of Communications and Outreach at the Presidential Climate Commission. He holds a bachelor's degree in law and numerous post-graduate qualifications in governance and communications. He has more than 20 years of career experience in public sector communications, stakeholder relations, intergovernmental relations and international relations, as well as public policy development.

## ELLEN DAVIES

Ellen is based in Senegal and, before joining the African Climate Foundation, oversaw the extractives and nuclear energy portfolios at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) South Africa. She has been working on questions of sustainable economic development for the past ten years and has a keen interest in geopolitics, political economy and gender issues.



**YOUR VOICE COUNTS!**



**CAMPAIGN**

**FOR A PEOPLE CENTERED  
G20 PRESIDENCY!**







For the past few months, Democracy Works Foundation has spearheaded the Africa @ the G20 campaign, which includes a survey that serves two purposes:

1

Provides bite sized facts about the G20 and its infrastructure

2

Collects data and insights about Africa's role at the G20 and what its priorities should be

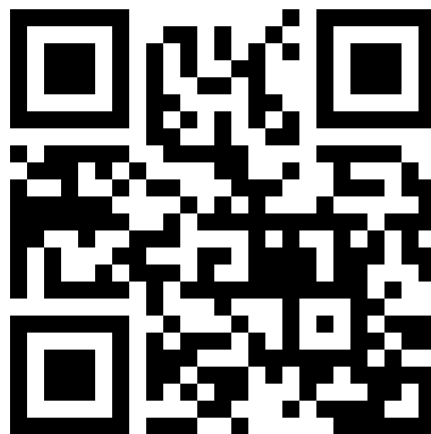
## WHY THIS MATTERS?

2025 marks a historical first - South Africa is the first African country to host the G20 Summit. This landmark event is pivotal, with the African Union now holding a permanent seat at the G20 table. Together, these developments offer an opportunity to amplify African voices in shaping global economic and development priorities.

To ensure African perspectives are front and centre, we invite citizens, civil society organisations, business leaders, researchers, and changemakers to participate in a short baseline survey (5-7 minutes).

SCAN ME FOR THE SURVEY

start brainstorming



CLICK HERE FOR SURVEY



# PODCAST SERIES

Thought leaders, civil society organisations and political actors are critically engaging with the F20 recommendations, reflecting on their relevance and application within African contexts. Listen to their contributions in the Africa @ the G20 Podcast.

## EPISODE 1



In conversation with Malango Mughogho on the F20 recommendations, aimed at elevating the role of philanthropy and civil society in building a just, inclusive, and sustainable global economy.

[CLICK TO LISTEN TO EPISODE 1](#)

SCAN ME FOR  
EPISODE 1



## EPISODE 2



In conversation with Zarina Moolla, Head of Implementation (Africa), C40 Cities on what the F20 recommendations mean for Africa's urban centres.

[CLICK TO LISTEN TO EPISODE 2](#)

SCAN ME FOR  
EPISODE 2



AFRICA @ THE G20  
EXPLAINER

**SHARE**

ONLINE



**THE G20  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
SIMPLIFIED**

## G20 4 WHAT?

Hey, Siba! Did you hear on the radio something about the G20? What is that thing? A new lotto game?



The G20 is like a big WhatsApp group for the 20 most powerful countries in the world.



"They meet every year to talk about money, climate change, jobs—big stuff that affects all of us!"



**CLICK OR SCAN FOR THE FULL G20  
EXPLAINER COMIC**





# ABOUT DWF

Democracy Works Foundation is an African non-profit organisation dedicated to fostering resilient democracies in the region. Established in 2014 in response to the weakening of public institutions, corruption, and declining public participation in South Africa, DWF addresses challenges to democratic and development progress across Africa and within an increasingly polarised and regressive global political economy. Headquartered in South Africa, DWF builds inclusive, equitable, and sustainable consensus-oriented democracies by working on the supply and demand side of democracy, and the nexus in between. We provide research, ideas and tools to, on the one side, strengthen institutions, capacity and leadership [supply] and on the other side civil society and citizens [demand]. As nexus in between, we facilitate platforms for constructive, inclusive engagement between supply and demand. In so doing, we strengthen a democratic culture of inclusivity, equitability and consensus.

Democracy Works Foundation [DWF] has, since 2017, made significant and strategic contributions to strengthening democratic institutions and practices in Southern Africa. Working on the demand and supply of democracy and the nexus between, through carefully designed interventions across political parties, electoral processes, women's leadership, engagement with regional bodies, and civil society, DWF has emerged as a credible, trusted, and neutral convener of politically diverse stakeholders.

# OUR REGIONAL TRACK RECORD

## POLITICAL PARTIES WORK



DWF's core political party strengthening initiatives, the Southern African Political Parties and Dialogue (SAPP&D) Programme [2017-2023] and its successor, the Political Parties and Elections Support [PPES] Programme strategically positioned the organisation as a leading actor in promoting accountable, transparent, and inclusive party systems across Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Eswatini, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia. Recognising that vibrant multiparty systems are indispensable to democratic governance, DWF adopted a distinctive three-pronged strategy: bilateral engagements with individual parties, cross-party national initiatives, and regional peer-learning exchanges.

**[Click or scan to learn more](#)**



## ELECTIONS WORK



Understanding the centrality of credible, competitive elections in sustaining democratic systems, DWF integrated election preparedness and stakeholder engagement as a core stream of its programming. Across programme countries, DWF delivered pre-election training to political parties, covering electoral laws, poll watching, voter outreach, and ethical campaigning.

[Click or scan to learn more](#)



## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WORK



DWF's commitment to inclusive democracy is most visible in its extensive work promoting women's political leadership. This was integrated within SAPP& D as well as PPES programmes and expanded through a dedicated one-and-a-half year intervention - the Capacity Enhancement for Political Advancement of Women [CEPAW] Project in Botswana [2021-2022]. The CEPAW initiative responded to Botswana's persistently low female political representation by establishing the Botswana DWF Academy for Women Political Leadership, a bespoke leadership development platform.

[Click or scan to learn more](#)





## CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING WORK

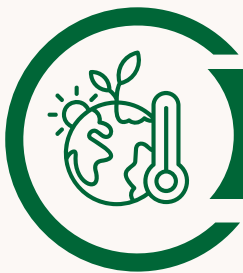


Recognising the indispensable role of civil society in fostering accountable governance, DWF strategically positioned itself as a bridge-builder between CSOs and political parties. Through multi-stakeholder dialogues, DWF facilitated constructive engagements addressing governance, policy, and social inclusion challenges.

[Click or scan to learn more](#)



## CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE WORK



Democracy Works Foundation's Fostering Inclusive Growth Through Climate Change Champions (FIGCCC) project demonstrates how democratic governance and climate action can be mutually reinforcing. Focused on South Africa's Northern Cape and Western Cape provinces, the initiative promotes participatory processes in the renewable energy economy by strengthening the ability of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to influence municipal planning and development. It prioritises community-driven development by ensuring that climate adaptation and mitigation goals are shaped by local voices, not imposed from above.

[Click or scan to learn more](#)





As Southern Africa, and the continent in general, continues to navigate complex democratic transitions, Democracy Works Foundation remains well-positioned to scale its impact, deepen regional partnerships, and continue supporting the institutions and actors vital to building inclusive, responsive, and democratic governance systems.





# WHAT BRINGS US TO ACS?

With the support of the African Climate Foundation and Ford Foundation, Democracy Works Foundation launched the Climate and Environmental Governance Programme (CEGP) reinforcing and consolidating our climate governance work into a distinct programme area. Over the last year, we have worked to define, safeguard, and celebrate African models of climate and energy democracy. The programme anchors our belief that democratic processes must shape climate transitions.

At Democracy Works Foundation (DWF), we recognise that climate and energy democracy in Africa is embedded in the continent's complex socio-political context and ongoing debates around democracy, governance, and public service delivery. Drawing on the growing collaboration among South-South and South-North actors committed to climate action, we recognise the importance of strengthening climate and energy democracy as a pathway to achieving broader governance and development priorities. This means ensuring that energy and climate transitions are governed in ways that are equitable, inclusive, and transparent at all levels of decision-making. Our Climate and Environmental Governance Programme Strategy, defines four key principles of climate, energy and environmental democracy – using these to guide our work across the continent and beyond.



# PRINCIPLES OF CLIMATE AND ENERGY DEMOCRACY

These principles inform our project design, strategic partnership formation, and advocacy agendas, and include:

## PRINCIPLE 1

### INTEGRATE ADAPTATION INTO THE JET

Investment in renewable energy must be leveraged to support the adaptation and resilience building priorities of local communities.



## PRINCIPLE 2

### STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

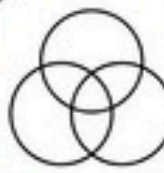
Climate interventions should be aligned with, and integrated into, local governance structures to ensure long term benefits.



## PRINCIPLE 3

### INTERSECTIONALITY AS EFFICIENCY

Intersectional environmentalism is essential - not only to understanding the convergence of challenges, but also to creating sustainable socio-economic returns on investments.



## PRINCIPLE 4

### STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Resource pooling, multi-stakeholder platforms, and collaboration is essential to building resilience through shared goals.





# ABOUT F20

Foundations play a pivotal role on climate policy as they can be a bridgebuilder on climate action between the public sector, the private sector and civil society. F20 sends a strong signal to governments, recalling the crucial role that civil society and other non-state actors play for implementing sustainable development within the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

F20 aims to align G20 politics with the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda.

F20 focuses on advocacy activities, research and the convening of philanthropic organisations.



# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE G20

Take Action to Foster Economic Prosperity through a  
Just and Inclusive Shift to Renewable Energy

**1**

Implement Measures to Catalyse Sustainable  
Industrial Decarbonisation

**2**

Transform the Global Financial System to Drive  
Climate and Development Goals

**3**

Strategically Align and Mobilise Flexible Financial  
Resources with Climate Goals and Sustainable  
Development

**4**

Drive Solutions for Climate-Smart Agriculture to  
Promote Food Security and Biodiversity

**5**

Advance Intersectional Environmentalism for Equitable  
Climate Solutions

**6**

Strengthen Country Platforms for Effective  
Development Cooperation

**7**



A person is shown from the chest up, holding two small potted plants. The plants are in dark, textured pots and have green leaves. The person's face is partially visible, looking down at the plants. The background is blurred and has a warm, yellowish tint.

SCAN ME FOR THE POLICY BRIEFS



## UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATIONS20 RECOMMENDATIONS THROUGH AN AFRICAN LENS

In 2025, Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) was appointed as the chair of Foundation20 - a group of 80+ philanthropies and foundations committed to climate and sustainability action. Chaired by Raisa Cole, Climate and Environmental Governance Lead at DWF, the Foundations20 released their recommendations to the G20 Presidency in February 2025. This set of 7 recommendations includes a depth and range of topics with an appreciation of the whole system approach required to address the climate crisis. The F20 recommendations to the G20 set the tone for an ambitious agenda that connects climate action to the broader goals of economic transformation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These recommendations have a deep resonance on the African continent, and this policy brief explores how the recommendations support existing African climate and energy transition agendas. Under the South African G20 Presidency, the global community has a unique opportunity to re-imagine climate action through the lens of justice, inclusivity, and shared prosperity. This series of policy briefs draws from the thought leadership of African activists, scholars, policymakers, civil society, and private sector actors who are advancing climate and energy justice across the continent. By grounding the F20 recommendations in African realities, this series highlights pathways for achieving a just and inclusive energy transition that simultaneously addresses poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

[\*\*CLICK TO LEARN MORE\*\*](#)

**TRUST.  
TRANSITION.  
TRANSFORMATION.**

**A SPOTLIGHT ON  
GOVERNING SUSTAINABILITY  
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FORUM**

## Key lessons from the Climate Solutions Forum session on Governing Sustainability

At the recent F20 Climate Solutions Forum, Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) hosted a dynamic and thought-provoking session exploring how governance structures can drive equitable, transparent, and accountable transitions. Focusing on both the supply and demand sides of climate and energy democracy, our dialogue brought together leading voices from across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to interrogate what truly just transitions require, beyond policy and into practice.

### Reclaiming Climate Governance: Opening and Keynote Contributions

Opening the session, Raisa Cole, Climate Governance Lead at DWF, issued a powerful call for climate governance frameworks grounded in democratic principles: accountability, inclusivity, and transparency. As South Africa and many countries in the Global South face deepening climate risks, Cole reminded participants that climate governance does not exist in a vacuum, but is rather deeply embedded within broader political processes, power struggles, and governance frameworks.

In our keynote segment, Zarina Moolla (ICLEI Africa) shared implementation models for integrating climate action into city planning across seven African cities. She emphasised practical enablers, such as climate finance, multi-sector partnerships, and peer-to-peer learning, that can support local governments in delivering more climate-responsive development. This was followed by an address by Paula Leandro Quintas, who highlighted the importance of trust-based, networked governance, arguing that building resilience in Global South transitions requires systems rooted in collaboration, not competition.



Zarina Moolla



Paula Leandro Quintas



# DIALOGUE 1: THE SUPPLY SIDE OF CLIMATE AND ENERGY DEMOCRACY

## Embedding Participation in Governance Structures

Moderated by: Raisa Cole (Democracy Works Foundation)

Speakers: Ashraf Patel (The Institute for Global Dialogue), Irvan Tengku Harja (Habibie Centre, Indonesia), Brenda Martin (Independent Consultant, South African Energy Transitions), Dorah Marema (South African Local Government Association).





# DIALOGUE 2: THE DEMAND SIDE OF CLIMATE AND ENERGY DEMOCRACY

## Investing in Tech4Democracy and Youth Participation

Moderated by: Lerato Maloka (Democracy Works Foundation)

Speakers: Mandisa Mathobela (International development and philanthropy consultant), Nyasha Mpani (Project Lead, Data for Governance, Idasa), Paula Ellinger (Director of Social Innovation, Fundación Avina), Karabo Chadzingwa (Researcher, African Peer Review Mechanism)

The second dialogue turned the spotlight onto the demand side of climate and energy democracy, focusing on how communities (especially young people) are using digital tools to shape governance from the ground up. The conversation unfolded against the backdrop of growing civic disillusionment and shrinking participation spaces, asking a timely question: how can technology be harnessed not just to connect or consult, but to truly redistribute power?



SCAN ME





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**THANK YOU FOR  
JOINING US!**

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