



Study Guide

G20 Leader's Summit

Agenda:

Discussing ways to promote "Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability."

The Group of 20

Introduction

The Group of Twenty (G20) consists 19 nations (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States) along with two regional organizations: the European Union and African Union (inducted in 2023). The G20 members represent approximately 85% of the global GDP, more than 75% of the global trade, and roughly two-thirds of the world's population. The G20 serves as the premier forum for international economic cooperation, and it plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.

Presidential Role and Regional Alliances

The G20 lacks a permanent secretariat or staff. Instead, the G20 Presidency rotates annually among the members and is selected from a different regional grouping of countries. The 19 member countries are therefore categorized into five groups with no more than four countries in each. The majority of the groups are formed on a regional basis, that is, countries from the same area are typically put in the same group.

Only Group 1 (Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the United States) and Group 2 (India, Russia, South Africa, and Türkiye) **break this trend.**

Group 3 includes Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico.

Group 4 includes France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Group 5 includes China, Indonesia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.

The EU and AU, the 20th and 21st members, respectively, do not belong to any of these regional groups. Every year, a new country from a different group takes on the G20 Presidency. The countries within a group are each equally entitled to take

on the Presidency when it is their group's turn, though. India, from Group 2, held the G20 Presidency from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023.

Organisational Structure

The G20 lacks a charter and a secretariat. The Presidency, with assistance from the nations that held the Presidency before and after it (the Troika), is tasked with establishing the agenda for the Summit each year. The G20 initiative is directed by the Sherpas from member nations, who serve as personal representatives of the Leaders. The Sherpas manage discussions throughout the year, addressing agenda topics for the Summit and organizing the G20's substantive activities. The G20's activities are split into two paths: the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track. Across the two tracks, there exist working groups focused on specific themes, involving representatives from the appropriate ministries of member nations, along with participants from guest countries and various international organizations. The working groups convene consistently during each Presidency's term. The agenda is shaped by ongoing economic changes and by the objectives and assignments established in prior years. The G20 has a multi-year mandate to guarantee institutional continuity.

Sherpa Track

It is headed by a Sherpa, who is the representative of the Leader. Focus areas: Socio-economic issues such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade and investment, and empowerment of women. The Working Groups under this track include:

1. Agriculture Working Group
2. Anti-corruption Working Group
3. Culture Working Group
4. Development Working Group
5. Digital Economy Working Group
6. Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group
7. Education Working Group
8. Employment Working Group

9. Energy Transitions Working Group
10. Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group
11. Health Working Group XII. Tourism Working Group
12. Trade and Investment Working Group
13. Empowerment of Women

Finance Track

It is headed by the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, who generally meet four times a year, with two meetings being held on the sidelines of WB/IMF meetings

Focus areas:

Fiscal and monetary policy issues such as the global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture, and international taxation. The Working Groups and Workstreams under this track include:

1. Framework Working Group
2. International Financial Architecture Working Group
3. Infrastructure Working Group
4. Sustainable Finance Working Group
5. Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion
6. Joint Finance and Health Task Force
7. International Taxation Issues
8. Financial Sector Issues

2025 G20 Johannesburg summit

Agenda: Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability

The Johannesburg session of the G20 in 2025 was the twentieth gathering of the Group of Twenty (G20), a meeting of Heads of State and Government conducted at the Johannesburg Expo Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 22–23 November 2025. This was the inaugural G20 summit held on the African continent. The absence of key leaders from several major economies was also significant, including Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian president Vladimir Putin, who still sent delegations to participate. The United States of America was absent from the summit, even though it is a G20 member.

South Africa took over the G20 presidency from 1 December 2024 to November 2025, becoming the inaugural African nation to lead the forum; this period aligned with the continuous efforts of the international community to promote the United Nations Agenda 2030.

It marked the fourth consecutive G20 presidency held by a member of the Global South and BRICS, following Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023, and Brazil in 2024. South African officials stated that development issues affecting Africa and other Global South countries would be central to the presidency. President Cyril Ramaphosa reiterated this priority, saying that South Africa would “put Africa's development at the top of the agenda when we host the G20 in 2025”.

The presidency unfolded amid diplomatic tensions. Several preparatory meetings experienced disagreements among member states, and the United States declined to participate in some early sessions, citing concerns with aspects of the agenda. South African Foreign Minister Ronald Ramola stated in response that the G20 “should send a clear message that the world can move on with or without the US.”

Theme and Core Priorities

1. Under the presidency of Cyril Ramaphosa, the summit operated under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability." The agenda shifted away from traditional G7-aligned priorities to focus on:

- **Debt Relief:** Addressing the \$1.8 trillion debt burden facing African nations.
- **Energy Access (Mission 300):** A major initiative to provide electricity to 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.
- **Climate Justice:** Moving from "billions to trillions" in climate finance and launching the Africa Energy Efficiency Facility.
- **Global Governance Reform:** Strong calls for reforming the UN Security Council and international financial institutions to give more representation to Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

2. The Johannesburg Declaration

In a departure from tradition, the 122-paragraph declaration was adopted at the very beginning of the summit. Key inclusions were:

- The philosophy of "Ubuntu" (Ubuntu is a commitment to the African Philosophy of shared responsibility, mandating that G20 members act not just for their own interests but for the collective survival of the international community.)
- Commitment to tripling global renewable energy capacity.
- The Nelson Mandela Bay Target, which aims to reduce youth unemployment (NEET rates) by 5% by 2030.
- Direct mentions of seeking peace in conflict zones like Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan.

3. Major New Initiatives

- **ACITI Partnership:** A new technology and innovation partnership announced between Australia, Canada, and India.

- **Critical Minerals Framework:** A deal aimed at ensuring sustainable supply chains and keeping more of the mineral processing (beneficiation) within the source countries in Africa.
- **Ubuntu Legacy Initiative:** A program focused on accelerating cross-border infrastructure projects across the continent.

History

The G-20 was established in 1999 with the initial aim of fostering global financial stability through enhanced cooperation among the systemically important economies as well as through reform of the global financial governance architecture, including the key institutions. A broader group comprising finance ministers and central bank governors from major developing and emerging economies, as well as from the major industrialised

countries and the EU, was deemed necessary not only due to the increasing importance of the emerging markets but also because of the increased interdependency among systemically important economies. Before the formation of the G-20, the financial ministers and central bank governors of the key developed and emerging markets, as well as the representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, met four times in different assemblages: twice in 1998 in the form of the G-22 and twice in 1999 in the form of the G-33. According to the stakeholders, the proposals made at these meetings to reduce instabilities in the world economy demonstrated the potential benefits of a regular international consultative forum embracing the emerging market countries.¹ However, despite broad agreement, the number of members, the membership criteria, as well as the new forums' links to the formal multilateral financial and economic governance institutions gave rise to considerable debate. It is important to note that the formation of the G-20 and the debates surrounding it have a rather long history. The role of G-summitry has been discussed among policy-makers and scholars ever since the first informal meeting among major powers foreshadowed its present-day incarnation in the 1960s. A brief summary of the development of G-summitry is helpful to set the scene for the 1999 and 2008 developments.

List of Previous G20 summits with their Agendas:

- USA (2008 - Washington D.C.): Focus on emergency response to the global financial crisis and stabilizing banks.
- UK (2009 - London): Pledged \$1.1 trillion to restore global credit and blacklisted tax havens.
- USA (2009 - Pittsburgh): Officially designated the G20 as the "premier forum" for global economic cooperation.
- Canada (2010 - Toronto): Focused on fiscal consolidation and cutting government deficits in advanced economies.
- South Korea (2010 - Seoul): Introduced the "Seoul Development Consensus" to help developing nations with infrastructure.
- France (2011 - Cannes): Reforming the international monetary system and managing the Eurozone debt crisis.
- Mexico (2012 - Los Cabos): Promoting quality employment, financial inclusion, and food security.
- Russia (2013 - St. Petersburg): Launched the BEPS project to tackle international corporate tax evasion.
- Australia (2014 - Brisbane): Set the "2 by 25" goal to increase global GDP by 2% and reduce the gender labor gap.
- Turkey (2015 - Antalya): Focused on counter-terrorism (post-Paris attacks) and the Syrian refugee crisis.
- China (2016 - Hangzhou): Centered on the "New Industrial Revolution," innovation, and the digital economy.
- Germany (2017 - Hamburg): Heavy focus on climate change (Paris Agreement) and international trade.

- Argentina (2018 - Buenos Aires): Focused on the "Future of Work" and sustainable food security.
- Japan (2019 - Osaka): Launched the "Osaka Track" on digital governance and data flow.
- Saudi Arabia (2020 - Virtual): Coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and debt relief for poor nations.
- Italy (2021 - Rome): Theme: "People, Planet, Prosperity." Agreed on a 15% global minimum corporate tax.
- Indonesia (2022 - Bali): Theme: "Recover Together, Recover Stronger." Focused on digital health and energy transition.
- India (2023 - New Delhi): Theme: "One Earth, One Family, One Future." Inducted the African Union as a permanent member.
- Brazil (2024 - Rio de Janeiro): Theme: "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet." Launched the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.
- South Africa (2025 - Johannesburg): Theme: "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability." Focused on debt-for-climate swaps and local mineral processing in Africa.

Impact on us, common folks

If solidarity, equality, and sustainability are not upheld, the consequences are not limited to just policymakers, economists, and other officials, but they are lived realities that shape the lives of millions of people — young, old, people of various colours, ethnicities, sexualities, and gender identities.

Our youth is entering a world made by us, which has various immediate challenges but is very interconnected, much more than before.

First of all, there is a very persistent inequality that directly limits the opportunities. In many countries, the widening gap between wealth and income has resulted in unequal access to education, among other necessities. The recent

COVID-19 pandemic shed light on how millions of students from low and middle-income families were unable to continue their education across various nations.

Secondly, the lack of sustainability has serious effects on everyone's lives. Climate change is already disrupting education in flood and drought-affected regions, threatening food security and increasing health risks. For young people, there are immediate realities that jeopardize their right to a stable future. If this is continued, we all will be left with environmental degradation, economic strain, and a lower quality of life...which is something we're already leaning towards.

Lastly, a breakdown of solidarity leaves people particularly vulnerable. Conflicts, humanitarian crises, and pandemics disrupt youth education, safety, and mobility. Without global cooperation, the responses will continue to remain fragmented. For instance, the vaccine inequality in nations illustrated how the young population in poorer nations was left behind.

Current Scenario

The G20 today finds itself at the centre of some of the most pressing challenges confronting the international community. Its members account for the majority of global economic output and greenhouse gas emissions, granting the forum immense influence over global development trajectories. However, progress on solidarity, equality, and sustainability remains uneven and fragmented.

Economic inequality continues to grow both within and between nations. According to Oxfam, the richest 1% of the global population owns more wealth than the remaining 99% combined. This imbalance undermines social mobility, weakens trust in public institutions, and contributes to political instability. In many economies, younger generations face declining access to affordable housing, stable employment, and quality public services. Inequality also manifests in access to education, healthcare, and digital infrastructure. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed this divide sharply. UNESCO estimates that over 1.6 billion students were affected by school closures at the peak of the pandemic, with millions in developing regions

unable to participate in online learning due to a lack of internet access or digital devices.

Sustainability remains another critical concern. G20 members are responsible for nearly 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions, placing them at the centre of climate negotiations. While commitments to reduce coal usage and expand renewable energy have been announced, implementation remains inconsistent. The International Monetary Fund reports that global fossil fuel subsidies exceeded USD 7 trillion in 2022, much of it originating from G20 economies. Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly in developing countries and small island states. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise threaten food security, public health, and livelihoods. These realities underscore the urgent need for collective and equitable climate action.

Despite these challenges, the G20 has shown potential for reform. The 2023 presidency emphasised the theme “One Earth, One Family, One Future,” highlighting global interdependence. Discussions on digital public infrastructure, women-led development, and climate finance gained prominence. The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G20 member marked a significant step toward more representative global governance.

Case Studies

Nordic Countries: Equality and Social Welfare

Countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Denmark demonstrate that economic growth and equality can coexist. These nations employ high taxation alongside comprehensive welfare systems that provide universal healthcare, free or subsidised education, and strong social security. As a result, they maintain Gini coefficients below 0.30, among the lowest globally.

High social mobility and strong public trust in institutions are defining features of the Nordic model. These countries also invest heavily in renewable energy and

green infrastructure, showing how redistributive policies can complement sustainability objectives. While demographic and migration challenges persist, the Nordic experience highlights the long-term benefits of solidarity and equality.

Germany's Energiewende: A Path to Sustainability

Germany's Energiewende represents one of the most ambitious energy transitions undertaken by an industrialised nation. Initiated in the early 2000s, the policy aimed to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear energy while expanding renewable sources. By 2023, renewable energy accounted for over 45% of Germany's electricity generation, compared to less than 10% in the early 2000s.

The transition stimulated innovation and job creation, but also faced criticism due to rising energy costs and coal phase-out challenges. Germany's experience illustrates the complexity of balancing environmental sustainability with economic affordability and social stability.

Chile: Protests and Constitutional Reform

Chile demonstrates how inequality can undermine social stability. In 2019, protests triggered by a metro fare increase evolved into nationwide demonstrations against unequal access to education, healthcare, and pensions. Despite economic growth, Chile remained one of the most unequal OECD countries. The protests led to a constitutional reform process aimed at strengthening social rights and inclusivity. Although the proposed constitution was rejected in 2022, the episode illustrates how demands for equality and solidarity can reshape political agendas.

Indian Lens

India's approach to solidarity, equality, and sustainability reflects its domestic challenges and growing international role. Initiatives such as Jan Dhan Yojana, which have enabled over 500 million bank accounts, have expanded financial inclusion. Programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and constitutionally mandated reservation policies aim to address gender and social inequalities. India has emerged as a leader in renewable energy, ranking among the world's top countries in solar capacity. It co-founded the International Solar Alliance to promote affordable clean energy in the Global South and has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

At the global level, India positions itself as a bridge between developed and developing nations. Guided by the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, India emphasised inclusive, people-centred multilateralism, focusing on digital public infrastructure, climate finance, and women-led development.

Bloc Positions

United States

The United States prioritises innovation, private sector leadership, and strategic partnerships. It has rejoined the Paris Agreement and committed over USD 350 billion to clean energy through the Inflation Reduction Act. However, domestic inequality, political divisions, and fossil fuel dependence complicate its global leadership.

European Union

The European Union leads in sustainability through initiatives such as the European Green Deal, which aims for climate neutrality by 2050. The EU also emphasises labour rights, gender equality, and development assistance, though internal disagreements on migration and energy policy remain challenges.

African Union

The African Union advocates for greater representation, debt relief, and climate finance. Although Africa contributes less than 4% of global emissions, it faces severe climate impacts. The AU calls for reform of global financial institutions and equitable development frameworks.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia balances its role as a major energy producer with economic diversification efforts under Vision 2030. Investments in renewable energy and social reforms signal transition, though dependence on fossil fuel revenues remains significant.

Proposed Solutions

1. Strengthening Global Solidarity

- Encourage multilateral cooperation among G20 nations to address shared global challenges such as pandemics, climate change, and economic instability.
- Promote fair burden-sharing between developed and developing economies through financial aid, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives.
- Enhance coordination between international organizations like the IMF, World Bank, WHO, and UN agencies.

2. Promoting Equality and Inclusive Growth

- Reduce economic inequality by supporting inclusive trade policies and fair global supply chains.
- Improve access to education, healthcare, and digital infrastructure, especially in developing and least-developed countries.
- Encourage gender equality and youth participation in economic and political decision-making.

3. Advancing Sustainable Development

- Accelerate the transition to renewable energy and low-carbon technologies.

- Promote sustainable industrial practices and responsible consumption patterns.
- Support climate finance mechanisms to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects.

4. Bridging the Global Digital Divide

- Expand access to affordable internet and digital tools.
- Support digital literacy programs to ensure equitable participation in the global economy.
- Promote ethical and sustainable use of emerging technologies.

Suggested Moderated Caucus Topics

1. “Role of the G20 in Strengthening Global Solidarity During Global Crises.”
2. “Balancing Economic Growth with Environmental Sustainability.”
3. “Reducing Inequality Between Developed and Developing Economies.”
4. “Climate Finance and Responsibility of Major Economies.”
5. “Promoting Inclusive Growth Through Digital Transformation.”
6. “Ensuring Equity in Global Health and Education Systems.”
7. Reforming Global Financial Institutions to Promote Equity.”
8. “South–South Cooperation as a Tool for Global Solidarity.”
9. “Sustainable Development Without Compromising National Growth.”
10. “Addressing Climate Inequality and Climate Justice.”

Conclusion

In an increasingly interconnected world, the G20 plays a critical role in shaping a future that is more united, equitable, and sustainable. By fostering international solidarity, addressing structural inequalities, and committing to long-term sustainable development, G20 nations can lead by example and ensure global stability and prosperity. Collective action, mutual responsibility, and inclusive policymaking remain essential to achieving shared global goals.

Research Links

(Note: Delegates, some of the links are only meant for light reading and thus are not highlighted. Only refer to the highlighted sources as valid proof, as others may or may not be accepted as a source of proof in the Council. The decision of the Presiding Officer regarding the acceptable sources is Final and Binding.)

Books

- Capital in the Twenty-First Century – Thomas Piketty
- The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better – Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett
- Prosperity Without Growth – Tim Jackson
- A World Without Poverty – Muhammad Yunus
- Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide – Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn
- Earth Democracy – Vandana Shiva

Articles

- Climate Finance and Resource Management – United Nations / World Bank
- There Is a Viable Way to Finance Carbon Emissions Reduction – OECD / IMF Policy Article
- Letter: Africa's Social Economy Is Key to Ending Aid Reliance – *The Guardian (Policy Opinion)*
- "The Spirit of the G8 'Make Poverty History' Summit of 2005 Seems Long Gone" – *The Guardian*

Documentaries

- Inequality for All (2013)
- Michael Moore Presents: Planet of the Humans – Directed by Jeff Gibbs
- Living the Change: Inspiring Stories for a Sustainable Future

Movies

- Extrapolations (2023)
- Queen of Katwe (2016)
- Tomorrow (Demain) (2015)
- Hotel Rwanda (2004)
- Children of Men (2006)

Government & Intergovernmental Reports

- Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – United Nations (2015)
- The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025 – United Nations
- Education for Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030) – UNESCO (2020)
- Gender Equality and Sustainable Development Report – UN Women (20

Some Sources:

https://www.g20.in/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/about_g20/G20_Background_Brief.pdf

https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/G20_Brief_for_website_-_27.10.11.pdf

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_G20_Johannesburg_summit

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07003.5?seq=2>