



भारत 2023 INDIA

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# T20 SUMMIT





## INTRODUCTION

The T20 Summit was the milestone event of T20 India. The Summit brought together 210 experts from 35 countries and 110 institutions.

It was a gathering of distinguished Task Force members and policy experts from around the world. It provided an opportunity to collectively showcase ideas and insights on the priorities of India's G20 Presidency including issues such as macroeconomics and trade, digital transformation, lifestyle for environment, green transition, global financial order, accelerating SDGs and reforming multilateralism. During the Summit, T20 had the privilege of releasing the final T20 communiqué and seven Task Force Statements, which encapsulate the key recommendations and policy proposals developed by the Task Forces – through a year-long process – for the G20 Leaders' Communique.

In addition to the policy discussions, the conference also offered international delegates and participants the opportunity to explore the beautiful city of Mysore and a cultural evening organised by the T20 Secretariat.



## OPENING SESSION

# CONTINUITY, COHESION, COOPERATION: NEW HORIZONS FOR THE T20

**Sujan Chinoy**, Chair, T20 India Core Group & Director General, Manohar Parrikar  
Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), India

**Luciana Servo**, President, Institute of Applied Economic Research, Brazil

**Bambang Brodjonegoro**, Professor, Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia,  
Indonesia

**Elizabeth Sidiropoulos**, Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs,  
South Africa

**Chair**

**Samir Saran**, Chair, T20 India Secretariat & Member, T20 India Core Group; President,  
Observer Research Foundation, India

The opening session focused on revisiting the think tank community's efforts in making the journey of T20 India special. Sujan Chinoy, elaborating on his takeaways, impressions, and assessment of the past eight months of collaboration in various capacities at the T20, highlighted some of the most significant recommendations that featured in the final T20 India Communique. Macroeconomic stability remained a priority for economic recovery and growth, with the T20 advancing recommendations for coordinating monetary, fiscal, trade, and investment policies within the G20. Emphasis on the digital economy as a means to advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); focus on global climate change governance; energy security and environmental protection; practical solutions under the "lifestyle for environment" framework; a reimagining of the global financial architecture and multilateralism; prioritisation of gender equality and women-led development; and inclusion of underrepresented regional associations, such as the African Union, within the G20, were some other key inputs advanced by the T20.

Acknowledging the continuity in priorities between Indonesia and India due to their shared characteristics as emerging economies with similar development challenges, Bambang Brodjonegoro emphasised that India's involvement in Indonesia's T20 Summit was instrumental for the smooth transition of priorities. He also commended the collaborative relationship between the T20 and T7 and highlighted the need for both groups to continue to complement each other's agendas. Encouraging India's efforts in involving various countries and stressing the importance of inclusivity, Prof Brodjonegoro urged the upcoming T20 presidencies—Brazil and South Africa—to continue fostering inclusivity, enabling a more comprehensive analysis of issues, particularly in low-income and developing economies.

Luciana Servo, while lending her perspective on the priorities addressed in the final T20 Communique, highlighted the unique contributions Brazil aims to bring as the next host of the T20 Summit. She emphasised on the significance of maintaining continuity of Global South presence in the G20, with countries like Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa representing the developing world and addressing global issues such as climate change, inequality, and digital transformations. Dr Servo also expressed hopes of promoting the inclusive approach taken by Indonesia and

India by engaging with South African and Latin American think tanks, currently not involved in this network, fostering dialogue between different regions. While highlighting some potential areas of focus for Brazil's T20 presidency, including addressing inequalities, poverty, hunger, gender equality, multilateral reform, and accelerating the SDGs, she noted that the Brazilian G20 agenda is still being developed and they plan to establish a dialogue between the T20 and G20 agendas to ensure alignment. On Brazil's consecutive leadership roles in the G20 and BRICS and how the two agendas will be designed, Dr Servo stressed that there is significant potential for dialogue between these groups and the intention will be to create connections with various regional and international organisations, focusing on an inclusive approach.

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos provided her perspectives on the T20 India Communique and its relevance to the African continent. She also discussed the importance of the G20 focusing on development dimensions, especially for vulnerable countries in the Global South and highlighted the issue of social inequalities in the context of development, emphasising on the need for creating an environment that supports fiscal space and doesn't penalise countries for external challenges like climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic. She also commended India's initiative on debt and mentioned that South Africa is likely to focus on debt, social inequalities, taxation, the global tax system, just transition, climate adaptation, and loss and damage. Regarding the African Union's potential membership in the G20, Ms Sidiropoulos saw it as a positive step that would enhance the African voice, allowing for better articulation of the continent's challenges.

Addressing the challenge of making the T20 outcomes and statements impactful in formal institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the European Union, the discussants highlighted several key points on how the T20 community can influence these institutions and bring about real change, including engagement and effective communication with the Track 1, maintaining continuity in priorities and cohesion in successive agendas, highlighting impactful decisions, engaging with allied communities, striking a balance between in-depth research and comprehensive



analysis with agile and digestible communication, and training and capacity building. The panel concluded with a consensus that engaging with formal institutions, ensuring effective communication, and cultivating a spirit of collaboration and inclusivity are essential for the T20 community to make a meaningful impact on global policies and decisions.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report has been compiled by Debosmita Sarkar, Junior Fellow, CNED, ORF.*





## SHERPA'S ADDRESS AND LAUNCH OF THE T20 INDIA COMMUNIQUE

Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa of India, addressed the global think tank community and launched the Think20 India Communique at the T20 India Summit in Mysuru. Expressing his appreciation for T20's efforts in taking the G20 agenda to various meetings across India, Mr. Kant emphasised on the efforts India has undertaken during its presidency in pushing the envelope in terms of ambition, inclusiveness, and decisiveness in order to provide greater impetus for growth, particularly in developing countries and emerging markets.

With the spotlight on the four consecutive G20 presidencies of Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa, Mr. Kant called attention to this unique opportunity for emerging countries to set a development agenda that is cognizant of both the aspirations and the concerns of the developing world. He called for a financial system that supports the needs of emerging markets and ensures the achievement

of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. Highlighting the reverse trend in global financial flows, where resources are flowing from emerging markets to developed countries despite the higher growth rates in emerging markets, he emphasised on the need to reform and redesign the global financial architecture—one that is capable of supporting a new era where emerging markets will lift mass segments of people out of poverty.

Another significant change discussed by Mr. Kant was the digital transformation that began during the pandemic, with digital public infrastructure being utilised to effectively provide resources to citizens. He underscored that technology should be at the heart of driving progress and leapfrogging development and acknowledged the role of Big Tech companies in driving innovation. He further emphasised on the importance of citizen-owned data being utilised in the public interest. Using the examples of Estonia, Brazil, and India, Mr. Kant pointed out how digital public infrastructure has allowed emerging nations to do technological pole-vaulting in a manner that the world has never seen before. The need for long-term resources was also highlighted by him, particularly in addressing the challenges of sustainable development and climate change underscoring an estimated requirement of about US \$7 trillion per annum for these resources.

Emphasising on the current statistics, Mr. Kant highlighted that although the world faces challenges in finding resources, transitioning towards a new climate-friendly economy will create new job opportunities and an economy worth about a hundred billion. He stressed that the world has investable assets worth US\$ 350 trillion that can be mobilised towards these goals. However, he noted that the lending system should shift from the balance sheet of institutions like the World Bank to the balance sheet of the world, enabling greater transparency in lending and the flow of resources. He further went on to propose a market-based approach that penalises companies responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, driving investments toward green and digital companies for global prosperity.


Illustrating India's commitment to renewable energy and carbon neutrality, Mr. Kant invoked India's ambitious climate commitments announced at Glasgow. He highlighted India's low contribution to global carbon emissions and urged other countries to join efforts in combating climate change. He also stressed the importance of resources flowing into emerging markets, particularly for handling



the young demographics. Additionally, Mr. Kant discussed the need for multilateral institutions to be redesigned for the challenges of the 21st century and the significance of gender equality as one of the key drivers of India's G20 presidency. He concluded by acknowledging the importance of geopolitics but also stressed on the need to prioritise global issues such as climate action and gender equality. The address drew to a close with Mr. Kant expressing his deep appreciation for the efforts of the T20 Engagement Group. He also extended his congratulations to the T20 team for their hard work, intellectual brilliance, and contribution to the G20 movement.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This report has been compiled by Pratinashree Basu, Associate Fellow, ORF.*





# ACCELERATED AND EQUITABLE ENERGY TRANSITIONS: EXPLORING INTERLINKAGES ACROSS CRITICAL MINERALS AND INCLUSIVE MSME DECARBONISATION

## Special Address

**Tae-Yoon Kim**, Senior Energy Analyst, International Energy Agency

**Françoise Nicolas**, Director, French Institute of International Relations, France

**Stormy-Annika Mildner**, Executive Director, Aspen Institute, Germany

**Mohua Mukherjee**, Senior Research Fellow, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, UK

**Fabio Vera Soares**, Director of International Studies, Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brazil

## Chair

**Tirthankar Mandal**, Head of Energy Policy, World Resources Institute, India

**T**wo critical issues continue to impede a rapid and inclusive energy transition at the global scale; namely, the lack of reliable and accessible supply chains for critical minerals, and the inaccessibility of affordable clean energy for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). In a panel discussion titled, “Accelerated and Equitable Energy Transitions,” experts discussed the interlinkages between the two and explored policies and regulations to address them holistically. A special address from Tae-Yoon Kim was followed by the panel discussion featuring Françoise Nicolas, Stormy-Annika Mildner, Mohua Mukherjee, and Fabio Vera Soares as they engaged in an instructive dialogue.

Tae-Yoon Kim made the point that, from solar panels to batteries, critical minerals are foundational to the green energy system work. The energy transition will be extremely mineral intensive. As a direct result, there has been a surge in demand for critical minerals. Between 2017 and 2022, lithium demand tripled whereas demand for cobalt increased by 70 percent and demand for nickel by 40 percent. As the energy transition accelerates, it becomes more and more important to secure reliable and affordable supply chains for critical minerals. Any disruption in the supply chain leads to a fluctuation in mineral prices, which directly increases the price volatility of clean energy: this deters decarbonisation, especially for firms without deep pockets, such as MSMEs.

According to Kim, there are three fundamental challenges facing critical mineral supply. First, whether or not supply can keep up with rapid demand growth. There is reason to be optimistic about this, as indicated by recent increases in capital spending, in the form of exploratory spending and as well as critical mineral development spending. Second, whether or not sources of supply can be diversified. This challenge allows less optimism since the market share of the top three producers in 2022 has either remained unchanged or has increased as of 2019, especially in the cases of cobalt and nickel. Third, whether or not the supply can be clean and responsible. The appraisal here is mixed: it appears that progress has been made in social indicators—such as community investment, worker safety, and gender balance—but environmental indicators—emissions, waste, water use—are lagging.



Supply chain vulnerability was another key point of discussion. Françoise Nicolas made the argument that while the ‘weaponisation’ of supply chains is a common anxiety among policymakers, it is hard to accomplish in today’s world. While choke points in critical mineral supply chains are vulnerable to being ‘weaponised’, this may prove complex in practice owing to the interconnected and interdependent nature of today’s global economy. Stormy-Annika Mildner touched on the importance of resource partnerships between countries to address risks and secure supply chains. She recommended that such partnerships be inclusive rather than exclusive; that they be committed to addressing market distortions without introducing new ones; that they be multilateral rather than bilateral; and that they harmonise due diligence approaches for ease of MSME decarbonisation.

Mohua Mukherjee offered insight into why MSMEs are not adopting green technology readily: the current offerings as well as clean energy delivery mechanisms are not value propositions for MSMEs. Clean energy solutions, when compared to more conventional energy sources, are costlier, less reliable, and require more maintenance. Additionally, the cost of switching to greener technologies is usually cost-prohibitive. Fabio Vera Soares pointed out that, due to the above reasons, the green transition must be financially incentivised. Governments must compensate MSMEs for decarbonisation. Since new green sectors are going to generate a large amount of employment, policies must be designed to provide these incentives, as well as extend social protection and up-skilling opportunities to workers.

On the question of climate finance, the panellists reached a consensus that the magnitude of financing required will necessitate a combination of public and private capital: blended finance. International partnerships, in the form of private industrial partnerships with the support of governments, are the need of the hour. Additionally, since credit is a barrier to decarbonisation for smaller firms, green investments must be de-risked for MSMEs.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Promit Mukherjee, Associate Fellow, ORF and Rishith Sinha, intern, ORF*

# T20 SUMMIT

31 JULY - 02 AUGUST 2023

HYDRABAD



## THREADS OF TRANSFORMATION: UNRAVELLING THE INTERSECTIONALITIES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SDGS

**Neera Nundy**, Co-Founder, DASRA, India

**Li Xiaoyun**, Chair Professor, China Agricultural University (CAU), China

**Vijay Datta**, Principal, Modern School (Barakhamba Road), India

**Prarthana Ramesh**, Head-Environment City-Systems, Janaagraha, India

**Uthara Narayanan**, Co-Founder, Buzz Women, India

### Chair

**Aparna Roy**, Fellow and Lead, Climate Change and Energy, Centre for New Economic Diplomacy, Observer Research Foundation, India

In the aftermath of the global pandemic, cities worldwide faced unprecedented challenges, exposing the fragility of their infrastructure and the inadequacy of preparedness. The urgent need for a transformative approach to development and urban planning became evident, especially in the context of escalating climate threats and extreme weather events. Prathana Ramesh stressed on how this need is magnified in developing countries where urbanisation propels economic growth and social development. With cities projected to host 68 percent of the global population by 2050, addressing vulnerabilities becomes paramount, making urban resilience central to the thread of transformation. Resilience is intricately linked to a city's ability to address the impacts of climate change, rendering the exploration of the intersectionality of climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) imperative.

Li Xiaoyun believes that governance can help in mitigating the impacts of climate change and achieving sustainable development, weaving together finance, global cooperation, and international efforts. Local governing bodies play a crucial role in orchestrating policies and frameworks that foster sustainable urban development, while global platforms like the Conference of the Parties (COP) facilitate collaboration and the sharing of best practices.

Reimagining future cities that foster economic empowerment, community resilience, and sustainable development requires striking a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation, particularly in the face of climate change challenges. The SDGs serve as a guide in achieving this balance, addressing economic viability, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and resilience.

SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) highlight the importance of economic empowerment for sustainable urban development. However, the challenge lies in achieving economic growth while minimising negative impacts on natural ecosystems, a balance that cities, as emphasised by SDG11 (sustainable cities and communities), play a central role in achieving.

Community resilience, a key component of SDG11, involves addressing the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations. Climate change intersects with various SDGs, affecting poverty reduction (SDG1), health (SDG3), education (SDG4), gender

equality (SDG5), and economic growth. Recognising the bidirectional causality between climate change and these goals necessitates a collaborative approach, with community intervention at its core.

Empowering women and youth emerge as a cornerstone in building community resilience. Uthara Narayanan highlighted the gendered impact of climate change and asserted how it should take centre stage, with a transformative perspective on the role of women as powerful agents for change. “Youth, being the most vulnerable to the consequences of global warming, need to become active drivers of climate action” said Vijay Datta. He averred that sustainability should be integrated into educational curricula.

Neera Nundy emphasised on the pivotal role played by philanthropy in climate action, urging philanthropists to take calculated risks and unlock additional resources, bridging funding gaps in climate initiatives. In the face of complex climate challenges, philanthropists have the unique ability to bridge funding gaps in climate initiatives, offering crucial support where traditional funding may fall short. By embracing a forward-thinking approach and investing in innovative solutions, philanthropy has the power to drive transformative impact. Beyond financial contributions, philanthropists can influence and shape the climate action landscape by leveraging their networks, expertise, and advocacy. According to her, this proactive engagement not only accelerates the development and implementation of sustainable initiatives but also inspires a collaborative spirit that is essential for addressing the urgent and interconnected challenges posed by climate change.

In conclusion, reimagining future cities necessitates a holistic approach that addresses vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic, acknowledges the interconnectedness of climate change and the SDGs, and underscores the pivotal role of governance, community empowerment, and global collaboration. Embracing this transformative vision can lead to the creation of cities that are not only economically robust but also resilient in the face of evolving challenges, steering humanity toward a sustainable and equitable future.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Aparna Roy*



# T20 SUMMIT

31 JUL 02 AUGUST 20



## TAKING STOCK: 2030 ENERGY OUTLOOK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL NET ZERO EMISSIONS

**Mallika Ishwaran**, Chief Economist, Shell International, UK

**Matthias Caton**, Director of Corporate Development, Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany

**Paul Samson**, President, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Canada

**Vibha Dhawan**, Director General, The Energy and Resources Institute, India

### Chair

**Nilanjan Ghosh**, Director, Think20 India Secretariat, Center for New Economic Diplomacy and ORF Kolkata, India



To chart a viable course towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050, it is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current emissions trajectory until 2030. By drawing lessons from past mistakes, the necessary adjustments can be made to ensure a fair and inclusive transition worldwide. In the panel session titled, “Taking Stock: 2030 Energy Outlook and Implications for Global Net Zero Emissions”, panelists Mallika Ishwaran, Matthias Caton, Paul Samson, and Vibha Dhawan engaged in a discussion chaired by Nilanjan Ghosh assessing the path to global net-zero emissions by 2050.

Mallika Ishwaran, presenting work from Shell's Scenarios Team, discussed three major trends emerging from the research. First, due to the transition from one type of energy system to another, this decade is going to be a period of high volatility in energy prices. This is because of the interim period in the middle of the transition where there is supply inflexibility and inelasticity, amplifying any market disruptions into large price movements. Second, the adverse impacts of climate change are only going to get more apparent. It is more likely than not that the world will see a year breaching the 1.5°C Paris Agreement limit within the next decade. Third, technological innovation moving forward, owing to breakthroughs in automation, digitalisation, and AI, is going to become more unpredictable than ever as pertaining to how energy is produced, distributed, and used. Following this, Ishwaran introduced the “energy trilemma”: the trade-off between energy security, energy equity (comprising energy access and affordability), and the environmental sustainability of energy.

Georgios Bonias then discussed scenarios for India's path to net-zero carbon emissions. He noted with optimism that the volume of India's energy consumption which comes from electricity has increased strongly in the last few decades and is only expected to increase. To support this positive trend, substantial investments will be required in maintaining and expanding the power grid. Subsequently, Bonias touched on the source of this electricity. He said that in India, the share of electrification from non-fossil sources of energy has been declining, largely due to the increased use of coal for power generation. This is a trend that needs to be reversed for India to be able to reach net zero by 2050. Alternative sources of energy include intermittent sources such as solar and wind; these will require

further development of energy storage solutions. As pertains to liquid fuel, biofuels have the potential to gradually displace oil. India is well-placed to become a large supplier of first-generation biofuels, an important step for the path to net zero. However, as the energy system becomes more sustainable and less carbon-intensive, the development of advanced, second-generation biofuels will become a higher priority. Concerning gaseous fuels, Bonias stressed the importance of putting in place a hydrogen economy in the medium-long run.

The relationship between economic growth and energy demand growth presents a virtuous cycle: as the energy system becomes more efficient, strong economic growth will be accompanied by slower growth in energy demand, making the transition towards net zero easier. Lastly, Bonias emphatically stated there is no scenario to get to net zero or even natural emissions without large-scale carbon removal.

Matthias Caton, presenting the perspective of business, discussed how climate change is already negatively affecting business operations. With respect to the “energy trilemma”, Caton argued that there is today a clear hierarchy—energy security on top, followed by equity, followed by sustainability—and that it is of crucial importance to invert the structure to put sustainability back on top. Paul Samson introduced another trilemma to the discussion: the balancing act between the climate crisis, international cooperation, and financing. The finance gap is in the range of US\$1 to 4 trillion, he stated, talking of domestic as well as international finance for both adaptation as well as mitigation. To address this financing gap, Samson offered the solution of blended finance: using public dollars to de-risk private investments. This, in his view, is the only way to mobilise enough capital to adequately address global climate challenges. Lastly, he touched on the topic of emissions trading, mentioning how voluntary trading has not been taken up by many countries, despite being enabled by Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Carbon markets would allow a reduction in the cost of climate action to the tune of US\$250 billion annually by 2030.

Vibha Dhawan introduced nature-based solutions to the discussion. She advocated for a more holistic approach; for instance, instead of subsidising electricity for irrigation, farmers could be awarded credits for following green practices such as using solar energy for pumping groundwater; credits could be given for planting trees; indigenous communities could be given credits for providing carbon fixation services through their management of forest ecosystems. Arguing that the cost of green technologies is front-loaded, Dhawan recommended the provision of concessional loans to address the high amount of initial expenditure. Concluding the discussion, Samson argued that the creation of a global carbon market is essential for a just transition to a net zero future.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Promit Mookherjee, Associate Fellow, ORF and Rishith Sinha, intern, ORF*





## SPECIAL ADDRESS

**H.E. Mehdi Jomaa, Former Prime Minister of Tunisia**

H.E. Mehdi Jomaa started by extending gratitude to the T20 India Secretariat for hosting the T20 Summit that offered a unique platform to discuss the shaping of an inclusive and prosperous future for all. As the former Prime Minister of Tunisia, he underlined that for long, the vision of Africa and other regions in the Global South had been limited or even ignored. He asserted that global governance needed to be more inclusive in order to be effective and that India's G20 presidency had shown the way forward by addressing the concerns of the Global South. He further expressed his appreciation for PM Modi's support to the idea of permanent membership of the G20 for the African Union. He pointed out that other institutions like the International Monetary Fund should expand its executive board by creating additional seats for developing countries, especially the African countries.

He further reminded that multilateralism in the 21st century must focus on tackling global challenges such as climate change, poverty, financing, health, and education. The lack of adequate representation from Africa and the Global South could be detrimental to the effectiveness of the G20 agenda. He highlighted that

more than 50 countries were at high risk of default or facing extremely expensive market financing with inflation and rising interest rates, adding to the unsustainable financial pressures. Countries in Africa now spend more on debt servicing than on healthcare which needs urgent redressal. He implored that the international community must reform the international financial architecture to make it resilient, equitable, and accessible to all. Reimagining a future of growth and development in Africa must start with a radical transformation of the financial systems. Africa and the Global South should be supported financially and technically to help their economies to accelerate decarbonisation. Adequate voices from Africa are crucial for the G20, though the region's inclusion will pose some challenges for the African Union and the African countries which needs to be overcome.

He highlighted that by 2050, Africa will be home to a quarter of the world's population. This presents a unique opportunity to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in the region. Africa and the Global South have the potential to contribute to the emerging multi-sector connectivity corridors for transport, supply chain, communication, energy, and diverse economic activities. Hence, it is imperative to strengthen the status of the African Union and the Global South within the G20 agenda. First, increased representation of African and Global South leaders in a global forum needs to be there to ensure their voices are heard. Second, it is crucial to increase financial support and investment in sustainable development projects in areas like infrastructure, education, health, and technology that prioritise the economic and social well-being of these regions and preserve their potential for the benefit of future generations. Third, initiatives like facilitating technology transfer, knowledge sharing, and skills development will be essential.

In other words, the Global South needs to move away from being labelled as a low-cost region and build its future on knowledge and innovation with collective action. He emphasised on the potential of the African region and reiterated the need to create a cooperative and responsible multilateral environment that transcends borders.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This report was compiled by Ambar Kumar Ghosh, Associate Fellow, ORF.*





## SPECIAL SESSION

# TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT: SAFE SPACES, ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND REGULATORY CERTAINTY

**Mahima Kaul**, Head of Public Policy, APAC, Bumble, India

**Anir Chowdhury**, Policy Advisor of the a2i Programme, ICT Division and the Cabinet Division of the Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh

**Baratang Miya**, Founder and CEO, Girlhype Women Who Code, South Africa

**Erin Watson**, Founder and Managing Director, Baker & York, Australia

**Chair**

**Sharad Sharma**, Co-Founder, iSPIRT Foundation, India

The session started off with Sharad Sharma visualising the current technology ecosystem and establishing a link between public technology and private innovation stakeholders. He then invited the panellists to share their experiences with this nexus and highlight the principles that guide their interactions with technology for development.

Mahima Kaul set off the discussion by highlighting the G20 Sherpa's prioritisation of women-led development, and linked it back to how there is still a massive digital divide in terms of gender due to unwanted contact online. She then explained how Bumble has sought to fix this by allowing women on its platform to reach out first and minimise this unwanted contact, so that there are safer online spaces for women.

Sharad then shifted the conversation to techno-legal regulation and invited Anir Chowdhury to talk about Bangladesh's experience with technology for development. Anir explained how Bangladesh had an innovative AI-based syndromic surveillance system for COVID-19, wherein people could call in and report their individual COVID symptoms, which would then help the COVID lab in Dhaka to formulate more effective responses. He specified that this process also put focus on data privacy and ownership of the electronic data collected from respondents, including potential plans to cross-pollinate this data for other public services and how this process should be regulated.

The discussion then flowed into local technical contextualities and the technological relations between the Global North and South. Baratang Miya brought, in her own experiences of running a programme to teach women and girls to code in South Africa, the spotlight how the Global South has perceived this link. She explained how data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have become huge considerations, and big tech companies are now leading the tech conversation as opposed to academia and research communities that used to be at the forefront before.

Erin Watson brought in the Global North perspective and claimed that Australia has been slower on the technological uptake as compared to countries like India and Bangladesh. She elaborated on the idea of digital public infrastructure (DPI) and how the private sector has played a massive role in its expansion. She caveated this by describing how there is often a siloing of decisions and actions between the government and private companies, and all of these angles have to come together for effective policy-making, from both the Global North and South.

Sharad took this point forward and contextualised it to the Indian landscape of public technologists being at loggerheads with civil society at the beginning of the Aadhar and UPI revolution and pushed for a global conversation between the two factions. Erin added to this point and underlined how the Indian G20 and T20 processes have been widely inclusive of the Global South and various multi-stakeholder networks, and any similar future conversations should be conscious to include these voices as well.

The last point of discussion focussed on how AI can act as an impetus or force function for technology for development. Anir came from a macro-governance perspective on this and stressed the importance of AI in ensuring digital literacy through vernacular languages, user innovation, and democratisation of learning and building, even though AI would make some human skills and jobs like coding obsolete. Mahima brought in a private sector response to the AI question and explained how most companies are looking to turbo-charge their functioning with this technology, but cautioned how people may risk becoming more isolated and withdrawn if most things are automatised.

Sharad then mentioned how the upcoming year will see elections in four relevant geographies—India, the United States, the European Union, and Taiwan—and how we now need to be wary of election security vis-à-vis deepfakes. Baratang agreed and furthered this point by talking about AI biases and the threat of misinformation, as well as pushing for people to be more critical and questioning of emerging technologies. Anir tied together the discussion by thanking the G20 for being inclusive and hoped that the G77 would follow in its stead. Sharad ended the session on this note and further hoped that we could bring multiple stakeholders from various geographies and perspectives together for future discussions at the G20 level.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This report was compiled by Shimona Mohan, Junior Fellow, Centre for Security, Strategy and Technology, ORF.*



# T20 SUMMIT

31 JULY - 02 AUGUST 2023

MYSURU



## LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT (LIFE): A NEW PARADIGM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Eenam Gambhir**, Joint Secretary (G20), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India

**Gladys Lechini**, Professor, International Relations, National University of Rosario, Argentina

**Noura Mansouri**, Research Fellow, King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, Saudi Arabia

**Dilanthi Nadeeka Koralagama**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

### Chair

**Sachin Chaturvedi**, Member, T20 India Core Group & Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India

**T**he LiFE initiative is India's first step towards mainstreaming sustainable consumption and climate resilient lifestyles to create a greener, cleaner world. But to make the most of the movement's potential, there's a need to create metrics to measure and compare sustainable consumption and production and to identify interventions that will help consumers adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Gladys Lechini raised the concern of increase in inequality and climate crisis as critical challenges that impact global development. She further emphasised on the differentiated responsibilities and vulnerabilities, and compromises, as important considerations in addressing issues like inequality and climate change within the context of global development and international cooperation. Noura Mansouri mentioned how the concept called "LiFE" encompasses and aligns with multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (4, 7, 11, 12, and 13) and underscored their interconnectedness in achieving holistic sustainable development. The 4 R's, namely reduce, reuse, recycle, and remove, for sustainable consumption and production represent a framework that encourages responsible behaviour and practices to minimise environmental impact, conserve resources, and promote a more sustainable way of life. LiFE, that promotes environmentally-conscious practices and sustainable living, can be a perfect segue for India in its presidency.

Dilanthi Nadeeka Koralagama focused on sustainable consumption as a pivotal strategy within the LiFE movement to address the intertwined challenges of environmental degradation and climate change. Through the lens of the LiFE movement, sustainable consumption becomes a conduit for promoting a holistic and balanced lifestyle that aligns with the planet's finite resources. Eenam Gambhir asserted how "India has put development at the heart of all G20 processes," that reflects the country's commitment to advancing its development agenda within the context of the G20. The adoption of the principles of "just transition" and "no one is left behind" by India within the G20 context reflects the country's commitment to ensuring that the process of transitioning to a more sustainable and equitable future includes all segments of society. Sachin Chaturvedi talked about the distinction between Millennium Development Goals and the SDGs, that entails a shift from quantitative targets to qualitative targets.

The intricate interlinkage between climate and development forms the cornerstone of sustainable progress. In essence, the interwoven fabric of climate and development necessitates a holistic approach that addresses basic needs, acknowledges common and differentiated responsibilities, and commits to environmental sustainability. The integration of ecosystems into urban planning further catalyses a transformative shift, fostering harmony between human progress and the natural world. Sustainable production is vital for environmental equilibrium and so is international cooperation for orchestrating unified responses to pressing ecological issues. The integration of the circular carbon economy into a larger sustainable lifestyle and an inclusive approach to energy transition presents a comprehensive strategy for addressing climate change, promoting environmental well-being, and ensuring equitable access to clean energy. We need to build on the G20 commitments every year to make it more sustainable, inclusive, and pragmatic.

The alignment of sustainable agriculture and food systems with the LiFE framework embodies a holistic vision of human interaction with the environment. Sustainable agricultural practices bolster food security and enhance community resilience, aligning with LiFE's commitment to inclusivity and well-being. The innovative approaches of climate smart agriculture and precision agriculture can collaboratively enhance the sustainability, productivity, and environmental conscientiousness of farming practices. It is time to synergise finance, ethics, and LiFE to navigate sustainable investment for environmental well-being. Ethical finance, which considers social and environmental impacts, resonates with LiFE's commitment to low environmental impact, mindful consumption, and societal well-being.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This report was compiled by Shoba Suri, Senior Fellow, ORF.*



# T20 SUMMIT

31 JUL 02 AUGUST 2023



## MAKING MONEY WORK FOR PEOPLE: TOWARDS A NEW FINANCIAL ORDER

**Hans Peter Lankes**, Visiting Professor in Practice, Grantham Research Institute, London  
School of Economics, UK

**Riatu Qibthiyah**, Senior Researcher, Institute for Economic and Social Research,  
Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, Indonesia

**Amar Bhattacharya**, Senior Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Development, Brookings  
USA, USA

**Bambang Brodjonegoro**, Professor, Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia,  
Indonesia

### Chair

**Ashima Goyal**, Emeritus Professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research,  
India

**T**he T20 session on “Making money work for people: Towards a new financial order” delved into the critical discussions and potential solutions surrounding the reimagining of a new financial order with increased financial flows, reduced costs, and greater predictability.

The session began with Bambang Brodjonegoro reflecting on the achievements of T20 Indonesia in Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) reforms over the past year, aligning with ongoing discussions at the T20 India. Professor Brodjonegoro highlighted that following the Task Force 5 communique, India had established an independent expert group dedicated to implementing MDB reforms. He proposed that establishing a strong connection between this group and the G20 working group would signal a positive commitment from G20 members to initiate MDB reforms. He also expressed optimism that Think20 could play a significant role in shaping these reforms and stressed the importance of influencing the global perspective on these reforms.

Furthermore, he suggested refocusing the goal of MDB financing itself. He advocated for all MDBs to prioritize SDG financing in their operations, considering the challenges posed by the pandemic, the scarcity of financing, and the lack of support from developing economies in achieving SDGs by 2030. He asserted that now is the opportune time for MDBs to realign their goals as institutions to support SDG financing. He also emphasized the vital role think tanks have played in blended financing. He argued that, instead of waiting for political decisions, it is crucial to move towards blended financing as an inclusive endeavour that can address current challenges and foster positive change.

Riatu Qibthiyah shared insights on fiscal economics and the relevance of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) for developing economies. She highlighted the diverse perspectives that may exist among emerging and developing countries regarding their developmental priorities. Emphasising the importance of sustainable development, she urged for a harmonious coexistence with efforts to address critical issues such as poverty, unemployment, and economic growth in developing nations. He further underscored the need for MDBs to align not only with government objectives but also engage proactively with various stakeholders, including the private sector.



Amar Bhattacharya emphasised the urgent need for change in the global finance system and outlined key ideas to enhance the role of MDBs as part of the solution. He pointed out that while there is a significant understanding of what is required, political will is crucial. He proposed three ideas for better use of existing MDB capital:

- **Augmenting capital through Innovations:** This involves using hybrid capital like guaranteed structures to maximize the impact of existing capital.
- **Fresh capital injection:** Despite facing resistance, he argued that bringing in fresh capital is essential, and the value for money gained from the investment is significant.
- **Mobilising private flows:** MDBs can increase mobilisation ratios and play a vital role in mobilizing private capital. He further stressed the importance of focusing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate finance, recognising the interconnection between the two.

He further emphasised the existence of substantial pools of private finance that could be effectively utilised. He proposed the collaboration of three to four major finance pools and outlined key suggestions. Firstly, there should be a concerted focus on mobilizing both public and private resources for stronger domestic resource mobilisation. Secondly, he highlighted the pivotal role of MDBs as the ignition key to the system, proposing to triple MDB financing in the next 10 years. Finally, he advocated for a new approach to engage with the private sector, going beyond blended finance. This comprehensive strategy involves co-creating investment opportunities, massive scaling up of risk mitigation structures, and smart deployment of blended finance.

Professor Hans Peter Lankes delved into the issue of volatility in developing nations, emphasizing that volatility comes with a price. He referred to the Paris Summit in June, where this concern was brought to the forefront, prompting multilateral institutions to devise solutions. One proposed solution is addressing excess volatility in these markets by providing cheaper systemic-level options for hedging. Professor Lankes, in his task force conclusion, highlighted the importance of finding ways to pool risk across multiple countries rather than opting for a fragmented approach to hedging, which could prove expensive. The pooling of risk, according to him, offers a much more cost-effective alternative compared to market

expectations. This approach aims to mitigate the impact of volatility on developing economies and enhance their financial stability.

During the final round of questions, Ashima Goyal inquired about Indonesia's experience with capital outflows and what measures could be taken to reduce such volatility. Qibthiyah responded by noting that, during the global financial crisis, Indonesia did experience some outflows, but the situation was manageable. She attributed this resilience to Indonesia's experience with more severe crises, such as the ASEAN financial crisis. She also emphasised the importance of coordination between the central bank and fiscal policy, which has contributed to stability in both macro and micro policies. Regarding systemic risks in Indonesia's financial sector, she acknowledged there are challenges, particularly in the banking sector, but highlighted that institutions are now effectively managing these risks. She concluded by stating that policymakers have learned valuable lessons from past experiences.

Concluding the session, Professor Brodjonegoro emphasised that Indonesia's top priority is macroeconomic stability, which has proven beneficial during global challenges such as high-interest rates and potential outflows. He highlighted that domestic policies have played a significant role in mitigating the impact of global issues on the country. However, in terms of foreign policy, he suggested that Indonesia should focus on deepening its financial sector to attract more inflow and reduce the risk of outflows.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Gopalika Arora, Associate Fellow, ORF and Neha Sheikh, intern, ORF*





## WOMEN-LED DEVELOPMENT: SCRIPTING NEW NARRATIVES

**Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, Executive Director, GWL Voices; Former President of the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

**Tetsushi Sonobe**, Dean and CEO, Asian Development Bank Institute, and Chair, Think7 Japan

**Saachi Bhalla**, Senior Program Officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, India

**Stephanie Diepeveen**, Senior Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute, UK

**Chair**

**Shamika Ravi**, Member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India



The discussion began with a reflection on the Indian G20 Presidency's agenda of making women-led development a priority and also the recent W20 Summit. Shamika Ravi highlighted that promoting women's leadership is not merely a question of gender equality but also a strategic necessity for economic growth and social progress. She emphasized the need to go beyond superficial representation and actively integrate women's perspectives into policy-making. Drawing on her experience as the Chair of the W20 Communiqué Drafting Committee she set the stage for the discussion and highlighted the work done within the W20. The W20 tried to narrow down 'women-led development' to five key areas, namely, women and climate change, women's entrepreneurship, gendered digital divide, grassroots leadership, and education, skill and labour market participation.

Dean Tetsushi Sonobe offered his perspective as a development economist and stated that women's development has positive effects on many aspects of development as well as on society overall. He highlighted that women's empowerment isn't just a moral imperative but also the driving force of sustainable economic development. He stated the demand-side biases and supply-side issues that hinder women's participation in the workforce. Closing gender gaps in the workforce could lead to an increase in productivity and have a positive impact on the economy. He highlighted the role of the academic community and private sector in promoting women-led development.

Saachi Bhalla spoke about women setting the agenda when asked about what women-led development meant. She also spoke about grassroots leadership of women and the positive impact that it has had in villages. She also brought forth the point about sex-disaggregated data and 'streetlight moments' as highlighted by Mark Suzman. She also spoke about the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in India and the resulting leadership and growth. She highlighted the learnings from programmes such as the NRLM and the positive spillover effects that it has had on society.

Maria Fernanda Espinosa said that women-led development is when we understand that all issues are women's issues. She reiterated the point that when women are treated better the quality of the society and the economy improves. She also spoke about the element of power sharing that is at the core of women's development.

Women are underrepresented everywhere except in the domain of unpaid work. She stressed that a gender-transformative approach is pivotal for holistic progress and underscored the need to have women at the forefront of decision-making processes. She reiterated that having women at the forefront of decision-making and taking affirmative action is important for comprehensive progress.

Dr Stephanie Diepeveen focused on women-led development from the perspective of the digital divide and access to digital resources. She spoke about access to and the use of technologies, and how women's access only comes after their male counterparts. She highlighted the ingrained bias against women in technologies owing to the existing data, and also the increase in online harm against women that is caused by the use of technologies. It is important to think about what can we do now to make things better and how can we make sure that the biases of today are not reflected in the future. She also gave examples of the use of AI in our everyday lives and the biases ingrained in these technologies.

The discussion concluded by reiterating that in addition to government interventions, the onus also lies on society as a whole to ensure women-led development. Ravi gave the example of the care economy—including children and the elderly—that overwhelmingly burdens women. Thus, providing the right infrastructure can free up women and is a key strategy to increase women's participation in and contribution to the economy. She stated that various engagement groups of this year's G20 have been discussing different aspects of the care economy and increasing women's participation in the workforce.

Watch the session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Urvi Tembey, Associate Fellow, ORF*



## ENERGY TRANSITIONS: TOWARDS A CLEAN AND EQUITABLE FUTURE

**Ulka Kelkar**, Head, Climate Program, World Resources Institute, India

**Albert Park**, Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank

**Barbara Buchner**, Global Managing Director, Climate Policy Initiative, US

**John J. Kirton**, Director, G20 Research Group, University of Toronto, Canada

### Chair

**Suranjali Tandon**, Associate Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India

**T**here is significant consensus among Global South countries on the need to develop an intersectional approach in addressing climate change while also ensuring that the energy transition is just, inclusive, and people-positive. The launch of the joint report by Shell and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), titled “India Transforming to a Net Zero Emissions Energy System: A Call to Action by 2030,” set the stage for a comprehensive exploration of India’s position in achieving decarbonisation goals and the necessary course corrections. The report sought to underscore the significance of aligning decarbonisation efforts with development goals, framing the report as a development-focused initiative cognizant of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nitin Prasad, Chairman of Shell Companies in India, highlighted the energy trilemma facing the world: energy security, energy equity, and energy sustainability, emphasising India’s role as a global leader and inspiration to the Global South.

The subsequent panel discussion, moderated by Suranjali Tandon, aimed to address the importance of inclusivity in the context of equitable transitions. John J. Kirton centred his initial response on the key areas of collaboration within the G20 to tackle climate change. He provided a comprehensive eight-point agenda, including ending fossil fuel subsidies; increasing climate finance to developing countries; ending unabated rise in thermal coal power plants by 2030 (starting with renewable-rich countries); focusing on renewable energy expansion globally; exploring nature-based solutions; recycling critical minerals; reforming the multilateral development banks (MDBs) to support energy transition efforts in the Global South.

Ulka Kelkar emphasised the need to scale up action, particularly in increasing the global share of renewable energy and electricity generation from 30 percent to 90 percent within a decade. She highlighted dilemmas related to creating better livelihoods and equity, especially for India’s MSMEs, and stressed the importance of G20 financing with a special focus on women. Furthermore, she highlighted the significance of public procurement as a means for demonstrating long-term policy certainty.

More specifically on the action points on which the G20 can collaborate in the field of finance, Barbara Buchner emphasised the need for clarity in the definitions of transition finance and the importance of uniform and harmonised taxonomies in this regard. She further highlighted the importance of reforming the international

finance architecture in a way that not only focuses on mobilising large-scale global capital but also on creating the right conditionalities among recipient nations to attract this capital.

Albert Park addressed potential collaboration in Asia with the G20, highlighting the importance of mobilising concessional finance. He outlined three tasks for the G20 to help develop market solutions to address climate change. These include carbon pricing which is not limited to capacity-building support for domestic carbon markets but also the need for developing an international carbon pricing system. Second, he emphasised on reporting standards and disclosure measurement systems for ESG markets. Finally, he advocated for free trade in environmental goods and services such that the adoption of green technology becomes more cost-effective. He also argued for more agreements on international burden sharing so as to encourage the flow of finance from the industrialised countries to the developing nations leading to more efficient carbon reductions.

Reforming the international governance system will be critical to push forward the climate finance agenda set by the G20. Kirton further opined on G20's potential, influence, and unique position to carry out these reforms within international governance, given its balanced representation from the Global North and South. While acknowledging the G20's commitments, he pointed out certain compliance challenges, with India standing out positively among the mix. Pulling this thread, Kelkar discussed the governance mechanism needed for a just and equitable clean energy transition, emphasising the impact on tax revenue, job creation, and the need for compensating carbon tax. As India undergoes the shift from traditional liquid fossil fuels to electric energy sources, it is anticipated that this transition will have dual effects on fiscal budgets. On one hand, there may be an adverse impact, stemming from changes in tax revenue collected from traditional fossil fuels such as petrol and diesel. On the other hand, the transition is poised to alleviate the burden on India's import bill, presenting a positive outcome in terms of trade balance. In this regard, a well-designed and redistributive carbon tax system can help offset many of these socio-economic challenges.

The session concluded with remarks from Barbara Buchner and Albert Park, focusing on broader institutions and instruments beyond public funding, calling for innovative mechanisms to unlock private capital and the effective use of public

finance. These may include designing new financial vehicles and funds to address some of the barriers and risks associated with climate finance.

In summary, the panel discussion highlighted the multifaceted nature of addressing climate change, underscoring the importance of an intersectional approach, just transitions, and collaborative efforts within the G20 to achieve a sustainable and equitable future. The discussions delved into specific action points, financing mechanisms, and governance reforms needed to navigate the complexities of transitioning to clean energy on a global scale.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report has been compiled by Mannat Jaspal, Associate Fellow, ORF.*



## VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

**S. Jaishankar**, Minister of External Affairs, India

**F**our points regarding the G20 merit attention. One is the importance of getting the G20 right. Its value in today's international relations is huge, and we need to ensure that it focuses on the right set of issues and comes up with an actionable consensus. Secondly, the journey from the financial crisis of 2008-09 of the G7 to G20 underlines the value of the unity of G20 member-states to tackle global challenges. In many ways, it also symbolises the transformation of our era – the realisation that the G7 by itself will not be sufficiently influential to deal with key global issues and that other major powers need to be brought on board.

Third, it is also important to remember that the G20 is not a United Nations Security Council. However, the gridlock presently afflicting the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the larger UN system makes the G20 even more important

than it would be in evolving a global consensus. Fourthly, the mandate of the G20 is development and growth. And if there is something which is under stress today, it is development and growth. Large parts of the world, even though they are not part of the G20, follow the grouping since they would like it to address these two vital issues.

The world today is not an easy place. There are two big problems on our hands – the East-West divide and the North-South gulf. The two are not unrelated to each other. The G20 and the Think20 (T20) process need to address these problems. As far as the contemporary issues facing the G20, there are deep concerns about fuel, food, fertilisers, healthcare, development, governance, debt and trade. Several of these directly emanate from the Ukraine conflict, but some are also pre-existing from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will take us years to come entirely out of the pandemic, materially and psychologically. Moreover, there are also apprehensions about how these impact two crucial issues—the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate action.

These issues affect not just the G20 countries, and therefore when India took up the G20 presidency in December 2022, it convened the ‘Voice of the Global South’ Summit in January 2023, where 125 countries participated in deliberations. So, many concerns that India raises today are the ones distilled from those deliberations. We have had some achievements, but there is still a lot of work in progress. However, the fact that we were able to get a consensus at the Development Ministers’ meeting in June 2023 on the idea of a sustainable lifestyle and the challenges impacting the realisation of SDGs, the theme of women-led development, and reform of multilateral development banks, underlines the importance of collaboration.

India has tried to connect the G20 presidency with the common people. Through this, India wants its citizens to understand that global problems, in some ways, are indivisible. But the government also wanted to have the opportunity for the G20 delegates to see the changes in India, as the last decade has been a truly transformational decade for the country.

The G20 is not impervious to what is happening in the world. Like any other grouping, it will absorb the big global developments of its time. More importantly, there will not be a single crisis. Instead, there will be multiple ones. And with each



one, the G20 will adjust, mutate and improvise—capture the entirety of what is happening in the world and determine the best contribution it could make in that situation.

The presence of Africa in the G20 is limited. India has championed the cause of the continent and emphasised that it should have a stronger voice and a bigger presence in the grouping. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has felt very strongly that the African Union must have a permanent membership of the G20. Towards this, India is eliciting a consensus from the other member-states. The continent has the demographics, resources and many other factors. But we must fix the continent's present to get its future right.

The multilateral framework led by the UN is anachronistic. It lacks the voices of emerging economies. The more this formal multilateral system fails us, the more the rest of the world has to pick up the slack—be it the G20 or the Quad. Hopefully, these dynamics will create pressure on the UN to reform.

The G20 needs to realise that what unites us today is more than what separates us. Indeed, there are deep differences within the grouping, but a larger agenda needs to be pursued for humanity and the planet. Therefore, we must find areas of convergence.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Sameer Patil, Senior Fellow, ORF*





# BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE: EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN GLOBAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE AND MACROECONOMIC POLICYMAKING

## Context setting

**Joseph Matola**, Economist, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa

**Awa Diouf**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, UK

**Gülbin Şahinbeyoğlu**, Center Director, Economic Data Analysis Center, Economic Policy Research Foundation, Türkiye

**Dennis Snower**, President, Global Solutions Initiative, Germany

**Haihong Gao**, Director of Research Center for International Finance, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China

## Chair

**Elizabeth Sidiropoulos**, Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa

**A**midst the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global community has been grappling with the intricate interplay between this crisis and the ongoing challenge of climate change. A pivotal exploration of this nexus unfolded during a panel discussion titled “Building Climate Resilience: Exploring the Nexus Between Global Financial Architecture and Macroeconomic Policymaking.” This discussion, with a specific focus on low- to middle-income countries, cast a spotlight on six African nations. To frame the discourse, Dr Joseph Matola and Awa Diouf took the stage.

Awa Diouf set the context by underscoring two crucial points. Firstly, she shed light on the concept of green recovery, emphasising how it had been a missed opportunity for Africa amid the COVID-19 crisis. Secondly, she delved into the fiscal situations of African countries. Regarding the former, Awa lamented the absence of climate considerations in the COVID-19 recovery plans of African nations, with some even adopting climate-unfriendly policies. On the fiscal front, she pointed to financing challenges as a major impediment to robust climate action. She further stressed that African countries, already grappling with a precarious fiscal situation, were hindered from implementing efficient macroeconomic policies to combat climate change.

Dr Joseph Matola followed by articulating three key points on the intricate linkages between climate change and macroeconomic policies. Firstly, he underscored the vulnerability of African countries to future shocks, particularly accentuated by the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted compromised fiscal states with balances at a concerning negative 4 percent of GDP and the adverse effects of high global borrowing costs, resulting in credit downgrades for African nations. Dr Matola also acknowledged commendable initiatives such as DSSAI and the common framework while pointing out deficiencies in various aspects. He advocated for further efforts in these areas. Finally, He accentuated the pivotal role of climate change in the macroeconomic policies of African countries due to the structure and nature of their economies.

Following the introductory context, the panel, moderated by Elizabeth Sidiropoulos embarked on a discussion aimed at exploring the ways in which climate considerations factored into the macroeconomic responses of six African countries to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In her initial inquiry to Dr Joseph, she sought insights into the specific climate responses of six African countries—South Africa, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. Dr. Matola, acknowledging the diverse nature of these countries in terms of their economies and industrialization noted that many considered climate change as an extension rather than a core component of their focus. He emphasized that, for these nations, the primary concern was the general welfare of the population, particularly in terms of employment. He further pointed out that fiscal interventions undertaken were largely climate-neutral, with the exception of Nigeria, where solar electrification for five million households was implemented. However, for the majority of the countries discussed, climate change was not a central aspect of their policy, indicating a missed opportunity.

Elaborating on the role of the G20 in driving and enhancing the resilience and capacity of low and middle-income economies, Gülbin Şahinbeyoğlu gave insights into the challenges faced by Türkiye. She highlighted the compounding effects of various global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine crisis, food shortages, and inflation. She drew attention to Türkiye's unique circumstances, and how this has hindered Türkiye's ability to adopt climate-friendly policies. She outlined four key solutions to address this gap. Firstly, she advocated for higher ground-based financing and the expansion of multilateral sources to meet the specific needs of low- and middle-income countries. This involves rallying for increased financial support from various sources and institutions on the ground. Secondly, she also proposed the redesign of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with a focus on directing these funds to climate change adaptation efforts in the aforementioned countries. Thirdly, she underscored the importance of leveraging government-backed banks operating at different levels. Lastly, she focused on the crucial role of private capital in bridging the financial gap and supporting climate adaptation initiatives.

Haihong Gao elaborated on what is needed from the IMF to ensure that trade-offs are not made when addressing climate change. She highlighted the IMF's swift response as the primary reactor during the pandemic, providing various tools to assist countries in combating the crisis. She acknowledged the inherent dilemma faced by the IMF—whether to adhere strictly to its original mandate established by the Bretton Woods system after World War II or to expand its scope to address long-term development issues. She also emphasised the need for the IMF

to embrace creativity and innovation, starting with the underutilised resource of SDRs. She noted that plans to re-channel SDRs are already in progress, marking a significant step toward addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

Dennis Snower initiated his address by underscoring the inherent tension between narratives advocating for a paradigm change, involving a systemic shift, and those advocating for minimal tweaks in economics while assuming the system remains unchanged. He emphasised the critical need to carefully consider the implications of a paradigm change. He argued that if we persist in assuming the system remains static, we may find ourselves helpless when necessary changes do not materialise.

In her concluding remarks, Awa Diouf highlighted Senegal's current challenges and potential pathways in the context of the country's energy dependency. The recent macroeconomic study of Senegal revealed concerns about the country's reliance on imported oil for electricity provision, especially during international oil crises, leading to complex fiscal situations. However, with the concept of just energy transitions and the discovery of Senegal's own oil and gas reserves, she emphasized the need to navigate the balance between self-dependency and climate consciousness.

Watch this session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Gopalika Arora, Associate Fellow, ORF and Neha Sheikh, intern, ORF*



## MACRO POLICIES FOR SECURING LIVELIHOODS: RETHINKING MACROECONOMICS AND TRADE

**Abla Abdel Latif**, Executive Director and Director of Research, The Egyptian Centre for Economic Studies, Egypt

**Heungchong Kim**, President, The Korean Association of the APEC Studies

**Vera Helena Thorstensen**, Head, Center for Global Trade and Investment Studies, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), Brazil

**Yose Rizal Damuri**, Executive Director, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Indonesia

### Chair

**Radhicka Kapoor**, Senior Visiting Fellow, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, India

**T**he T20 Summit was the milestone event of T20 India, graced by distinguished Task Force members and policy experts from across the globe. It collectively projected ideas and insights on the priorities of India's G20 Presidency. During the Summit, T20 had the privilege of releasing the final T20 communique and Task Force Statements, which encapsulate the salient recommendations and policy prescriptions developed by the Task Forces—through a year-long process—for the G20 Leaders' Communique.

This panel focused on key findings from the deliberations of Think20's Task Force 1 on how a pro-growth balance between trade and livelihoods can be sustained. Macroeconomic coordination and trade policy coherence exist in conjunction with employment generation and the provision of livelihoods. The prevailing global political and economic conditions necessitate coordinated efforts by G20 members on monetary, fiscal, and trade and investment policies to achieve job creation and improved livelihoods.

The G20 has developed mechanisms to coordinate macroeconomic policy and trade policies serving vital sectors of the international economy. However, these mechanisms can only function optimally if the critical linkage between macroeconomic stability and trade volatility is admitted and acted on. Worryingly, geopolitical risks along with security crises like “decoupling,” resulting from trade tensions between influential countries, supply-side shocks caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the security crisis in Europe have significantly curtailed the odds for macroeconomic coordination to ensure stability and post-pandemic recovery, and in turn exposed the magnitude of fragmentation in the global political economy.

Emphasising the complex set of global economic challenges, especially for emerging and developing economies, on the growth and inflation fronts along with the bleak existing prospects for trade growth, the moderator of the session, Radhicka Kapoor, stated the importance of enhancing coherence between monetary and fiscal policies and trade and investment policies to revive growth and generate employment. She stressed on realising inclusive and sustainable growth, which would provide jobs for women and youth.



Painting a grim picture of the post-pandemic global economy, Huengchong Kim, then mentioned the need to smoothen the demand for goods intertemporally. For this, he suggested the coordination of macroeconomic policies along with positive technology-driven supply-side shocks. Acknowledging the difficulty in implementation, he, however, stated that such harmonisation was still possible because some countries were willing to provide the necessary information to others. On the related issues of supply chain resilience and boosting trade and investment flows, Vera Helena Thorstensen highlighted the mainstreaming of security issues as a principal hurdle facing trade and investment flows. She also cited the “New Industrial Policy,” characterised by “a war of subsidies” between States, as a major problem. Finally, and importantly, she emphasised the global race for control over critical materials as posing a significant challenge to the efficient functioning of integrated global supply chains.

Yose Rizal Damuri pointed out that international trade-related activities have already contributed extensively to developing economies over the last four to five decades through opportunities to partake in the global value chain as well as by generating more and better employment opportunities. However, he added that the present international focus on resilience rather than economic interdependence has resulted in “policy uncertainty and also business uncertainty” due to increased protectionism, thereby hurting the global employment creation outlook.

Abla Abdel Latif concluded the session by stressing on the importance of “looking at specific success stories, particularly in the (Global) South.” She felt that successful models at the micro and community levels could often be scaled up and replicated in other countries, with assistance from the G20 where required.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This report is compiled by Aditya Bhan, Fellow, ORF.*







## SAVING THE SDGS: SEEKING NEW PATHWAYS TO THE 2030 AGENDA

**Pamla Gopaul**, Senior Programme Officer and Lead Coordinator Policy Bridge Tank Programme, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD

**Jacqueline Kitulu**, Chairperson of the Board, Rocket Health, Kenya

**Gopalkrishna A Tadas**, Visiting Fellow, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India

**Nitya Mohan Khemka**, Senior Fellow, PATH, India

### Chair

**Anna-Katharina Hornidge**, Director, German Institute of Development and Sustainability, Germany

**A**s the world approaches the mid-term review of the global progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is concerning that no country worldwide is currently on track to achieve all of the 17 SDGs under Agenda 2030. The recent Sustainable Development Report has highlighted the urgent need to address climate change and social inequality issues and bolster progress in achieving the poverty-related SDGs. Against this backdrop, the panel discussion on “Saving the SDGs: Seeking New Pathways to the 2030 Agenda” emphasised the need for exploring pathways to generate a substantial SDG stimulus, to the tune of US\$ 500 billion annually, to accelerate ambition and ensure SDG implementation by 2030. Dr Hornidge, while focusing the discussion on the current seven-year timeframe, also emphasised the groundwork for the post-2030 agenda and the importance of building communication channels and convergences for a discourse that extends beyond 2030.

Gopaul, representing the African voice, highlighted the significance of these global dialogues for the future as an opportunity to recalibrate global approaches and solutions within the international community. Drawing an analogy to hitting a “reset button,” she emphasised the need for re-evaluation and reformulation of strategies, both in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Africa’s 2063 goals. She also acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rise of extreme poverty. She stressed the African Union’s commitment to inclusive social and economic development, positioning Africa as a vital global player. The crisis has been a wake-up call for reform in various sectors like education, health, and food systems, and the hope for the 2024 UN Future Summit is to catalyse transformative changes in policies and norms to create an impact. Drawing attention to some of the notable initiatives undertaken by the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, Gopaul reinstated the agency’s commitment to delivering public goods and managing global platforms to harness Africa’s potential for progress.

Tadas mainly focused on the challenges currently hindering the achievement of the SDGs within the set timeline. While it is critical to acknowledge the progress made in certain areas like poverty reduction, nutrition, and child mortality rates, the overall progress has been, no doubt, slow. This is partly due to setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and unfolding and evolving geopolitical conflicts. Addressing this, Tadas emphasised the need to reverse the setback and accelerate progress. Despite concerns about the feasibility of achieving SDGs in the remaining seven years,

he maintained an optimistic outlook, underlining the global community's capacity to mobilise additional resources, skills, and efforts. Two key aspects remain—finance and non-financial mechanisms—for achieving the SDGs. On the financial front, Tadas emphasised capitalising on multilateral development institutions, including the reform of the international financial architecture, highlighting the importance of considering the needs of developing countries during any financial reform. He suggested a transformative approach regarding non-financial mechanisms, focusing on enhancing transparency, governance, and efficiency within the system. This approach could potentially reduce the resource requirements needed for achieving SDGs.

With a specific focus on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Kitulu discussed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on health systems globally. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have impacted health priorities, diverted funds, and hindered progress in areas such as maternal and child health and infectious diseases. She highlighted the importance of localising and domesticating SDG 3 to suit each country's specific needs to ensure further progress. She also stressed that achieving SDG 3 involved addressing social determinants of health, including affordable housing, manufacturing, and food security and proposed two key strategies. The first involved a multi-stakeholder approach, with established structures for collaboration among various stakeholders. This collaboration must leverage complementary services and technical expertise to achieve SDG 3, including financing from the private sector. The second strategy should embrace digital health technology as a transformative tool for aiding data management, information sharing, and health monitoring.

Addressing the conversation on the post-2030 agenda, Khemka emphasised the dynamic nature of SDGs as an enabling framework for action and the need to expand its ambit to include tackling complex issues such as intimate partner violence and cybercrime. She identified deep and intersectional inequalities as a key reason behind the disappointing SDG performance. These inequalities encompass gender, caste, and class, inhibiting access to education, healthcare, employment, and more, and reducing these inequalities at the core should intersect and cross-cut all goals. At the national level, Khemka stressed the importance of ensuring universal access to quality goods and services to reduce inequalities – serving the underserved, reaching the last mile, and implementing localised policies based on

ground realities. She also urged that global governance architecture should play a pivotal and enabling role, noting the need for equitable access to global public goods, just tax systems, and fair-trade rules.

Summing up the conversation around the challenges and approaches to SDG implementation and post-2030 strategies, Hornidge hopefully noted that the upcoming SDG review summit would provide opportunities to reset and ramp up ambition to advance the off-track progress of SDGs. However, she emphasised the need for political will and financing as critical drivers for SDG success. The panel recognised the role of think tanks in building a platform for trans-regional communication on these aspects for and beyond the 2030 Agenda. Highlighting collaboration within the knowledge community as a critical strategy for SDG implementation, the discussants agreed that the think tank community must continue efforts to generate foresight work that guides all stakeholders towards achieving the common global goals.

Watch this session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Soumya Bhowmick, Associate Fellow, CNED, ORF*



## BEHIND THE SCENES: MAKING OF THE INDIAN G20

**Muktesh Pardeshi**, Special Secretary (G20), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, India

### **Chair**

**Sachin Chaturvedi**, Member, T20 India Core Group & Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India

**A**s India assumed the G20 Presidency during geopolitical tumult and uncertainty over the post-pandemic recovery, representing the Global South has been high on its agenda. Naturally, it has not been an easy task for New Delhi to bring different voices together on global issues of climate change, sustainable development, and global supply chains, amongst others. What went behind the scenes in the making of the Indian G20? This was the key theme of the interaction led by Professor Sachin Chaturvedi with Amb Muktesh Pardeshi.

During the conversation, Amb Pardeshi highlighted seven challenges encountered in the making of India's G20 Presidency: a) creating an effective and robust organisational structure; b) establishing a unified voice for India at the G20 (exemplified through the logo and theme); c) advancing the G20 agenda effectively and easily, d) expressing the voice of the global South; e) narrating the India story; f) connecting with the people; and g) leaving a lasting legacy. Given that PM Modi had a clear-cut vision of making India's G20 Presidency a people's G20, it helped him and the G20 team to meticulously tackle these issues. People's participation, particularly the youth, has been the driving force. Initiatives like the "G20 University Connect" and "*Jan Bhagidari*" have been designed to connect with the local populace, bringing G20 to their doorstep. In fact, Amb Pardeshi highlighted that diplomacy for the government is a national endeavour. "You will notice that India's G20 meetings have been taken to the interior and remote areas of the country, be it rural or urban. So, diplomacy becomes a part and parcel of daily life for a common man", he added. Amb Pardeshi also stated that in the past eight months of India's presidency, people can actually associate themselves with the G20. The whole effort has been directed towards socialising and democratising diplomacy through a plethora of public events organised by the government.

When asked about India's contribution to the G20 working and engagement groups, Amb Pardeshi proudly mentioned the mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction as a new working group. This is particularly very close to India's development agenda, considering its involvement in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). On the engagement group front, India has added a new engagement group on start-ups. Earlier, this was being addressed by the B20 framework, however a few of the issues relating to the nascent subject

matter were being lost in the broader framework. Amb Prdesh also highlighted the launch of a new initiative for the post of Chief Scientific Advisor.

When asked about the kind of legacy that India aims to leave for the G20, Amb Pardesh remarked that the G20 operates through consensus. “In a span of one year, only certain things can be done. We cannot possibly resolve all the issues that the G20 agenda faces but there are always expectations that some of these issues will be pursued through successive presidencies. We are very fortunate that for the first time in G20’s history, four countries from emerging economies will be chairing. This is a golden opportunity. Our aspiration is to make G20, a G20 for all”, he said. There has been a wider consultation with the countries of the Global South, known as the Voice of the Global South Summit that was held in January this year. In Amb Pardeshi’s view, this is the legacy that India is leaving behind. No other country has undertaken this type of consultative process—at best, they have invited a few countries of the region to join as special invitees. On the other, India invited and encouraged participation largely from Africa like the African Union (AU), Nigeria, and Egypt. Then it held the consultative process in which almost 125 countries of the Global South participated. “It is not that we are claiming to represent the voice of the Global South, we have actually consulted them, their interests and concerns. As a result, we have the moral might or the moral authority to represent the countries who are not in the room”, Amb Pardeshi said. This also includes opening up the gates of the G20 grouping for the AU, and if that happens, it will certainly be a lasting legacy. “In terms of the domestic constituent of India’s G20 presidency, we would like to build a positive global narrative about India. We would like to showcase India for its democratic credentials—the mother of democracy, not only in terms of population but also known for the roots and birth of democracy”, he added. He also stated that India intends to share with the G20 visiting delegates the progress it has achieved, in terms of achieving developmental goals and technological advancement, and how well its doing despite being a diverse and pluralistic country.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Swati Prabhu, Associate Fellow, CNED, ORF*





## URGENT MEASURES: REFORMING GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS AND FRAMEWORKS

**Maria Elena Agüero**, Secretary General, Club de Madrid, Spain

**Rina Mussali Galante**, Advisor to the Board of Directors, Mexican Council of International Affairs (COMEXI), Mexico

**Antonio Villafranca**, Director of Studies and Co-Head, Europe and Global Governance Centre, Italian Institute for International Political Studies, Italy

**Andre de Mello e Souza**, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), Brazil

### **Chair**

**Leslie Vinjamuri**, Director, US and the Americas Programme; Dean, Queen Elizabeth II Academy for Leadership in International Affairs, Chatham House, UK



The session titled “Urgent Measures: Reforming Global Institutions and Frameworks” relating to the Think20India Taskforce 7 began with Leslie Vinjamuri reiterating Dr Jaishankar’s words on the importance of the G20 based on its flexibility to reach out to multiple stakeholders while formal multilateral institutions are stuck.

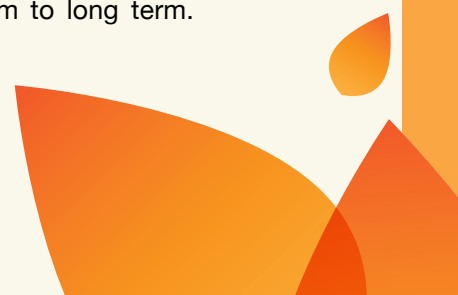
She highlighted that despite the current polycrisis, the world may soon have a multilateral system with leaders of two permanent members of the UN Security Council indicted either domestically or globally. As the moderator, she posed the key question of whether reforming multilateralism should focus on incrementalism and pragmatism; or transformation and evolution into an inclusive more legitimate multipolar world with many stakeholders.

María Elena Agüero began by emphasising the necessity of multilateralism, but the need for transformation through imagination, creativity, and innovation coupled with dialogue and exchange, instead of starting from scratch.

André de Mello e Souza urged for a more radical transformation based on the rationale that it was easier to create new institutions than reform existing ones. He alluded to the BRICS grouping’s struggle to reform international financial institutions, finally reaping little results through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). New institutions such as the BRICS Development Bank have been set up, presenting possibilities to advance.

Rina Mussali Galante elaborated on the need to interplay with both realities and address competing ambitions such as the clash between system and anti-system forces, open and closed societies, globalists and nationalists. The way forward is persuading major powers to cooperate by displaying the costs of action versus inaction. Shifting from multilateralism to minilaterals and plurilaterals undermines the convergence of common interests and a universalist approach to solving today’s transnational problems.

Antonio Villafranca, urged scholars in the context of the T20 to be both ambitious and pragmatic while indicating a path forward for political leaders. A distinction needs to be made in terms of achieving technical deliverables in the short term and a more transformative vision of global governance in the medium to long term.



On Vinjamuri's question on how the G20 could help build consensus on multilateral reforms, Agüero stated that the G20 based on its representative membership is an appropriate place for consensus. Yet G20 countries are also the source of today's tensions, which are transcending into the UN space as well. The discussions in the coming months starting with the G20 summit in September serve as opportunities to build much-needed consensus but require political will and leadership. She also reiterated that the world cannot function in silos since different elements impact each other, so the G20's broadened agenda makes sense.

Souza expressed his view that minilateral arrangements are often exclusive clubs of like-minded countries rather than a stepping stone towards a wider multilateral framework. Despite its importance, the G20 itself reflects some of the problems with multilateral institutions, with geopolitics very much being the elephant in the room. Consensus first needs a broad recognition that the present system is outdated and not fit for purpose in a world where the main challenge is the provision of global public goods. A clear North-South divide no longer exists, and the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) coined in the environmental conference of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro is now forgotten, despite the unequal capacities of countries to contribute to global public goods and share burdens. Souza also expressed his scepticism towards the prospect of UN Security Council reform.

Galante opined the optimistic view that momentum can be provided and awareness raised on the importance of multilateral reforms. The G20 needs to work on a minimum agreed agenda, identify common ground, and review best practices inside international organisations and reform inwards.

Villafranca highlighted the uneven impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on international organisations. While the G20 is undermined; others such as NATO going from 'brain dead' to enlargement, and the G7, have revitalised. Expectations from the G20 Summit and the COP28 are low, and the loss and damage fund decided at the COP27 is still an empty box. Yet the G20 can build consensus on issues where it has the ability to deliver. This is precisely what the Indian presidency is doing and is the best way to proceed.

Agüero alluded to possibilities within the system to review, for instance, the UN Charter. The G20, the Leaders Summit in September and subsequent discussions allow views to be brought forward in a long ongoing process, where the parts continue to build upon each other.

On Vinjamuri's question regarding the G20's top priority in the area of multilateralism, Villafranca emphasised the need to deliver, including pushing through on the global minimum tax and tackling the issue of financial instability, especially for the Global South.

Galante emphasised the need to routinely cooperate through dialogue so as not to allow geopolitical tensions to interrupt the collaborative spirit. Giving a voice to the Global South, which should in turn endorse its attributes to increase bargaining power, is a prerequisite to revitalising multilateralism.

Souza stressed that while the G20 attempts to provide a bridge between the Global North and South, the Global South is not monolithic. He mentioned the importance of resuscitating the principle of CBDR, and finally, giving not only representation but also decisional power to previously excluded stakeholders.

Agüero described the G20 as a forum that allows us to ease tensions, deepen discussions, and move towards de-risking in a different sense such as lowering the risk of conflict and finding solutions. She hoped that the recommendations made from the T20 to the G20 would eventually turn into solutions.

Throughout the discussion, the panellists referred to the year-long Taskforce 7 deliberations and TF7 Statement.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report has been compiled by Shairee Malhotra, Associate Fellow, ORF.*





## INNOVATION UNLEASHED: AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

**Parminder Jeet Singh**, Director, IT for Change, India

**Youn Jung Park**, Director, India Korea Center for Research and Innovation, India

**Chintan Vaishnav**, Chair, StartUp20, India

**Chada El Islam Manel Benmahcene**, Co-Founder and CEO, ENTROGX Startup Incubator, Algeria

**Chair**

**Astha Kapoor**, Co-Founder, Aapti Institute, India

**T**he Indian G20 presidency has been able to raise interest and awareness about the country's digital public infrastructure (DPI) at a global level. Indeed, the Indian DPI model is gaining traction worldwide, and its merits and potential have found mentions in multiple diplomatic declarations, including the recent Joint Statement of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council and the Quad Leaders' Statement. There is much enthusiasm about collaborations focused on building and deploying DPI, and DPI has also been a core focus of the Think20 Task Force on 'Our Common Digital Future'.

Parminder Jeet Singh pointed out that in many ways the deliberative journey of the T20 Task Force reflected the broader evolution in understanding the key changes introduced by digitalization. It was now widely felt, for instance, that government interventions are needed to deepen the development of digital infrastructure such as systems for payments, data exchange, and interconnectivity, even as they raise new questions about the nature of governance itself. Singh felt that while India had already demonstrated the benefits and power of DPI through its experiences with Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), there was now a need to theorize DPI in greater depth and identify related cases and best practices from around the world. Based on these theoretical frameworks and principles, laws could then be framed for DPIs, thus providing greater certitude and confidence to businesses and governments looking to innovate atop the DPI layers. The latter part of the Indian presidency, therefore, could consider focusing more closely on constructing inclusive theoretical models for understanding DPI better.

Young Jun Park noted that South Korea was a firm believer in enhanced e-governance. The country's successful experiment of linking citizens with suitable career opportunities through digital platforms, for instance, was driven by a philosophy of equitable access and inclusive growth that were distinctly similar to the core principles governing India's DPI. Similarly, South Korea's DPZ, a national e-governance initiative where services were designed in keeping with requests from citizens, was another pioneering digital infrastructure. Park felt that there are possibilities for exploring alignments between India's DPI model and South Korea's DPZ and sharing knowledge and ideas bilaterally. She lauded India's development of DPIs as open platforms that invite and enable private sector innovation and held out the promise of drawing on open government data to shape new citizen services. She concluded that while mechanisms such as DPI and DPZ were local,

their interoperability could be promoted; and in case of such interconnected systems, it would be important to establish robust agreements governing cross-border data flows.

Chintan Vaishnav outlined why startups were likely to build trust vis-à-vis DPI and feel encouraged to leverage DPI to innovate. A key consideration for startups to succeed, he said, is for them to be able to acquire customers and access existing digital infrastructures at the lowest possible cost. DPIs, by their very design, enable this. Also, nations with strong DPIs would attract digital startups because the prevalence of DPIs would allow startups to strengthen their business case, and give them a natural advantage. By contrast, industrialized nations might find it challenging to implement DPI given the entrenched nature of private sector legacy systems. Vaishnav pointed out that the rationale behind setting up the Startup20—a new G20 Engagement Group—during the Indian presidency, was to help make startups integral to global economic discourse and growth.

Chada El Islam Manel Benmahcene felt that the notion of DPIs aligned well with low- and middle-income countries' goal of achieving citizen inclusion and inclusive growth. For both DPIs and digital startups, a key priority is to achieve scale in terms of the use of digital products and services. This translates into promoting access and use across all social groups, including groups such as traditionally disadvantaged women. Yet, at a time when internet penetration across the world is less than 64 percent, there are needs even more basic and foundational than the need for DPI. These needs, she believed ought to be addressed first, after which governments, businesses and innovators could come in to help attain more sophisticated kinds of access and inclusion. Concomitantly, enabling regulatory frameworks and guidelines need to be put in place for innovation to thrive. Benmahcene concluded that for the G20 to keep the issue of DPIs alive and relevant, it would need to focus on three principal issues—promoting the intuitiveness, reliability, and interoperability of DPIs. The G20 could work towards ensuring that DPIs are user-friendly for all population segments, and include a core emphasis on supporting financial inclusion.

Watch the session [here](#).

*This event report is compiled by Anirban Sarma, Deputy Director, ORF Kolkata and Shrushti Jaybhaye, Intern, ORF*



## SPECIAL SESSION

# BRAZIL CALLING: THE ROAD TO RIO

**Luciana Servo**, President, Institute of Applied Economic Research, Brazil

**Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, Executive Director, GWL Voices; Former President of the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

**Marcos Caramuru**, Member of the International Advisory Board, Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI), Brazil

**Almir Nascimento**, Director, International Relations Research Institute, Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation, Brazil

### Chair

**Harsh V. Pant**, Vice President, Studies and Foreign Policy, Observer Research Foundation, India

The Special Session provided the first glimpse of the possible contours of Brazil's G20 priorities as the presidency for the G20 passes to Brazil. Ensuring continuity and cohesion between the emerging economies that make up the current troika will be critical to further the role of the G20 as the premium forum for policy coordination on critical global challenges. The panel discussion centred around the future and Brazil's role in it, with a focus on the perspectives of Brazil, Latin America, and global dialogue. The panellists aimed to continue the ongoing conversation, build consensus in the Global South, and facilitate collaboration among the troika of Indonesia, India, and Brazil. The conversation emphasised the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation to address a range of issues and challenges on a global scale.

Luciana Servo discussed the organisation of the T20 Brazil and its unique features, emphasising the continuation of dialogue, consensus-building, and representation and highlighted the participation of various institutions in Brazil and their role in shaping the T20 Brazil agenda. She stressed on the importance of including think tanks from both developed and developing countries, fostering inclusivity, and gender balance. The approach of co-leadership was mentioned, wherein experienced leaders would collaborate with those who have less experience, ensuring a diverse perspective for fostering a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue among think tanks and continuity in the Global South agenda.

Amb. Marcos Caramuru also highlighted the importance of the Global South's agenda, emphasising the need to address both disagreements and areas of agreement positively. He underscored the role of stakeholders beyond governments, including the private sector, media, and opinion leaders. He emphasised that the T20's outcomes and discussions would be of high interest, to maximise impact and influence, especially considering the upcoming United Nations Common Future Summit, ahead of the G20 India Summit.

Stressing the need to move beyond formulating ideas and focusing on practical execution, Almir Nascimento discussed Brazil's dual identity as both an Amazonian and an African-Atlantic country. He highlighted Brazil's initiatives to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference and the Amazon dialogue, emphasising the importance of involving think tanks from Amazon countries. The speaker also emphasised Brazil's desire to strengthen ties with Africa, celebrating African



contributions to Brazil's culture and highlighting the aspiration to have the African Union as a full member of the G20. He concluded by affirming Brazil's commitment to contributing to T20 discussions and thanked India for their successful presidency, expressing optimism about Brazil's ability to present innovative ideas and solutions through their engagement in the T20 process.

Representing Ecuador, a non-G20 country from Latin America, H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa delivered three key messages. Firstly, she addressed the importance of changing the narrative about the global South, moving from a perception of neediness to one of opportunity and innovation. Secondly, she suggested sustaining, boosting, and innovating efforts, particularly in areas like women's rights, and gender equality, and embracing a cross-working group approach for effective policy implementation. Thirdly, she also emphasised the need for greater engagement with non-G20 groups, mentioning Africa, Amazonian countries, and Latin America. These countries underscore the importance of Latin America and the Caribbean reclaiming their global voice and actively participating in discussions about both regional and global issues. Additionally, they advocate for a stronger G20 voice in multilateralism, UN reform, and international financial architecture.

Brazil expressed its commitment to reshaping these narratives, redesigning policies, and establishing new bridges to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive world. In conclusion, summing up the discussion about the future direction of T20 within the G20 processes, the speakers expressed optimism for the future, with a focus on collaboration, innovation, and meaningful global engagement and emphasised the significance of sustaining and accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address issues such as inequality, hunger, and poverty and the need for the G20 to have a stronger voice in multilateralism and UN reform.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report has been compiled by Soumya Bhowmick, Associate Fellow, CNED, ORF*





## CLOSING REMARKS

**Sujan Chinoy**, Chair, T20 India Core Group & Director General, Manohar Parrikar  
Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), India

**Samir Saran**, Chair, T20 India Secretariat & Member, T20 India Core Group; President,  
Observer Research Foundation, India

**A**fter 2.5 days of intense ideation and discussion, the Think20 (T20) Summit came to a close. The session helped conclude the final Think20 India conference during which the T20 Communique, seven task force statements, and three special reports were released.

Amb. Sujan Chinoy, Chair of the T20 India Core Group in his intervention thanked all the participants from around the world who supported the T20 in the past nine months. He also extended his gratitude to the T20 secretariat and other members of the Core Group in addition to the T20's International Advisory Board.

He emphasized the importance of the support extended by the G20 Secretariat, an important structure that was created by the Government of India and its representative present at the Summit which helped us keep constant communication with the Sherpa track.

The G20, he opined, is the most diverse and representative group that exists today, and the need of the hour is to ensure that we continue to work together as a team and bring about greater cohesion and cooperation. The fundamental aim, he continued, was to ensure that its focus remains, whether now or in the future on key developmental issues. The G20 is providing a new opportunity for the world to come together to create a new kind of multilateralism in which we are all equal, in which we do not keep others out of the G20 conversation, one that still can hold out hope for us and for the future of humanity.

It's not a question of the G20 trying to usurp the role of the formal UN structures but nor should it be a case of the United Nations or the UN Security Council trying to usurp the role of the G20. In this case, we want to ensure that the G20 does not sink. It's important to acknowledge the contribution of the think tank community and the research community that T20 India brought together—an eclectic crowd which enriched our discourse and conversation. The kind of pressure that the think tank communities can exert on their governments to contribute more to the G20 process will be one of the keys to future success in this fractured world.



On a similar vein, Dr Samir Saran, Chair of the T20 Secretariat added his thanks to the T20 members and the secretariat members. He thanked several key organizations that supported the T20 India process including the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the Observer Research Foundation and other partners.

The end of the Summit, he said, signalled the end of the part of our journey where we were responsible for providing ideas and inputs to the leaders. Going forward, he said, the time would be utilised to disseminate these ideas and go back to key research.

He mentioned that the Inaugural Cape Town Conversation, a dialogue to be hosted in November 2023 would be the first G20 and Global South Summit in South Africa. It has been formulated as an annual gathering that is focused on bringing voices from others into the mainstream of the G20 thinking. He averred that it is something that is going to be captured in the institutionalisation of the G20 Global Research Forum, the components of research convenings and capacity that we seek to undertake in the days ahead. “We are co-travellers, let’s celebrate the diversity, and the difference, and let’s make it our strength rather than a reason for friction.”, he said.

“We are already in touch with our Brazilian colleagues and have established a process that is going to allow for a smooth transfer on December 1st. From 1 November 2023, we will actively begin the process of handing over the keys to our colleagues and our friends from the different institutions that are going to be in charge in Brazil and like the Indonesians who held our hands in our early days we have promised to remain on call anytime they would need us as they settle into taking charge. Latin America is a part of the world that remains underexplored in many of our conversations and the Brazilian presidency is going to offer us a new cause for focusing on how we can serve all of humanity”, he concluded.

Watch the full session [here](#).

*This event report has been compiled by Jhanvi Tripathi, Associate Fellow, ORF*





भारत 2023 INDIA

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