



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025



Sherpa Track
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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

South Africa places inclusive economic growth at the centre of its national agenda. Hosting the Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency under this priority aligns with Brazil's previous leadership and provides a platform to continue the commendable work undertaken by Brazil in 2024. As Chair of the Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG), South Africa aims to build upon Brazil's initiatives and further contextualise these priorities during its presidency.

Assuming the Chairship coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. This is a significant moment as the world reviews the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2025.

Additionally, South Africa's Chairship occurs as the world marks a decade since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on women's empowerment and gender equality. With only five years left to achieve the 2030 targets, the Working Group under South Africa will champion accelerating SDG 5 among G20 members.

In 2025, the global community will commemorate the 25th anniversary of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This offers an opportunity for the EWWG to review the implementation of the WPS agenda and women's roles in peace and security.

Within this context, South Africa welcomes the opportunity to promote and build upon G20 initiatives on women's empowerment and gender equality, continuing the work of the Brazilian presidency. During its Chairship, South Africa will focus on G20 priorities for women's advancement, including addressing gender-based violence and femicide; tackling workplace inequalities by increasing women's labour force participation; closing the gender pay gap; addressing the care economy (both paid and unpaid care work); and promoting women's financial inclusion.

South Africa will further G20 efforts to promote women's participation and representation in leadership, governance, and decision-making, as well as women's ownership and control. To this end, South Africa will share its initiatives with G20 members, exchanging best practices to accelerate outcomes for women and girls in all their diversity. This platform will facilitate policy discourse and collaboration on evidence-based research for planning and policymaking among G20 states.

2. SOUTH AFRICA'S PRIORITIES AND DELIVERABLES OF THE G20 EWWG

South Africa will build on the approach adopted by Brazil's G20 Presidency, continuing the legacy of the 2023 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration on establishing the Working Group on the Empowerment of Women.

We will focus on three key priorities:

- **Key Priority 1:** Policy perspectives on the care economy—paid and unpaid care work and household responsibilities.
- **Key Priority 2:** Promoting financial inclusion of and for women.
- **Key Priority 3:** Addressing gender-based violence and femicide.

Key priorities 1 and 2 fall under women's economic empowerment, covering employment, women's entrepreneurship, labour force participation, policies promoting social responsibility, addressing the pay gap, promoting gender-responsive procurement, budgeting, planning, auditing, and fostering gender mainstreaming. The platform will highlight intersectionalities, with specific focus on young women and women with disabilities.

South Africa will use the platform to accelerate G20 progress on SDG 5, review the Brisbane Goal ahead of its 2025 target, and promote women's increased participation at political, governance, and decision-making levels.

Key Priority 1: Policy Perspectives on the Care Economy

Unpaid care work, primarily shouldered by women, is integral yet systematically undervalued and invisible. It limits women's ability to pursue education and employment, resulting in time poverty, poor health, and reduced well-being, further entrenching inequality. Activities like childcare, collecting water, cooking, cleaning, and helping with homework constitute this unrecognised labour essential for households and economies.

Measuring unpaid work is a global challenge due to a lack of disaggregated data, hindering effective policymaking. Time-use surveys are critical, providing comprehensive insights into how women and men spend time on various activities, including unpaid care work. These surveys reveal details of daily life, showing how activities are interrelated.

Building on previous G20 efforts, we must implement policies to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, promote work-life balance, and

strengthen the rights of paid care workers. Promoting equitable work and care policies is essential for gender equality and economic growth. Support mechanisms like affordable childcare, parental leave, and flexible work arrangements are crucial.

Key Deliverable:

Collaborate on research and policy measures towards *Counting Women's Work* with the University of Cape Town and global partners, including UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on programmes addressing unpaid care work.

Engage with the UN Statistical Commission on recommendations from the Ninth Global Forum on Gender Statistics held in 2023 in Johannesburg.

Key Priority 2: Promoting Financial Inclusion of and for Women

Promoting financial inclusion is crucial for economic empowerment and poverty reduction, enabling marginalised individuals to participate in the formal economy. It has social and political benefits, such as promoting gender equality, improving financial literacy, and reducing corruption.

Access to land, property rights, and assets is a critical component of financial inclusion. Ownership and control over assets empower women economically, enhancing their ability to access credit and financial services. However, legal and socio-cultural barriers often prevent women from owning or inheriting property, hindering their economic independence. Additionally, women face barriers to accessing financial services due to a lack of banking infrastructure, financial literacy, discriminatory practices, and socio-cultural constraints. Women are disproportionately excluded from financial systems, limiting their ability to save, invest, and build wealth.

Despite making up half the world's population, women remain disproportionately excluded from formal financial services, impacting their economic and social well-being. Challenges include lack of collateral, gender bias in lending, and limited financial education. Young women and persons with disabilities face additional obstacles. Enhancing financial inclusion for these groups is essential for fostering economic independence, promoting entrepreneurship, and achieving inclusive growth.

Achieving gender equality and economic justice requires comprehensive policy reforms and targeted interventions—a shared priority among G20 countries that contributes to more resilient and inclusive economies.

Improving access to financial services for women involves collaborating with financial institutions to develop products tailored to their needs, such as accessible savings accounts, affordable loans, and insurance options. Providing targeted financial literacy training and entrepreneurial skills development is essential to equip women with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Closing the gender digital divide is imperative. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) must incorporate a gender perspective, especially in skills development initiatives, to equip young women with relevant skills and prevent them from being left behind. The G20 must address the urgent need to ensure digital technologies benefit all young women and girls by promoting inclusive access to digital technologies and connectivity, and harnessing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for development through a multidimensional approach.

Key Deliverable:

Host a conference on Global Innovative Approaches and Best Practices Advancing Financial Inclusion for Women to explore critical issues surrounding financial inclusion, including access to land, properties, and assets.

Deliberate on models and strategies to address financial inclusion gaps between women and men, discuss ways to close the gender pay gap, promote gender-responsive procurement, and examine how gender-responsive budgeting contributes to financial inclusion.

Focus on the importance of planning and auditing in the budgeting cycle for effective mainstreaming.

The conference, hosted in partnership with the Tshwane University of Technology, the Banking Association of South Africa, and international partners, will bring together practitioners, experts, government officials, academia, the private sector, policymakers, development partners, civil society, and other stakeholders. The event will discuss innovative strategies, exchange knowledge, address challenges, and identify models for financial inclusion of women as a marginalised sector.

The conference will address the diverse needs of women from different backgrounds, such as rural, peri-urban, and urban areas; women with disabilities; women in the LGBTQIA+ community; women-led businesses; and women in agriculture.

Key Priority 3: Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) remain pervasive global issues rooted in systemic gender inequality and patriarchal norms. In South Africa, high incidences of GBVF have led to the development of a National Strategic Plan (NSP) to end GBVF. This plan promotes a preventative and responsive approach through multi-sectoral coordination involving government, civil society, the private sector, religious and traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, and other stakeholders—adopting a whole-of-society strategy to combat these issues.

The NSP recognises all forms of violence against women and children across diversities, affirming access to services as a human right. By harnessing the roles and resources of multiple stakeholders, the NSP aims to effectively address GBVF at all levels.

Despite significant feminist achievements, GBVF continues at alarming rates worldwide, exacerbated by interlinkages with teenage pregnancy, gender inequality, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic. These challenges are compounded by gender disparities rooted in structural poverty, hunger, and unemployment, which disproportionately impact women.

Advancements in technology have introduced new forms of GBVF, such as cyberbullying, which disproportionately affect women and girls. Cyberbullying includes harassment, abuse, and intimidation on digital platforms, leading to psychological harm and reinforcing gender inequalities. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive strategies, including legal frameworks, digital literacy education, and collaboration with technology companies to enforce policies that protect users.

Addressing and preventing GBVF is a key priority, necessitating the exploration of best practices to institutionalise effective approaches. Achieving tangible progress involves enhancing coordination, leadership, accountability, implementing evidence-based interventions, and promoting women's economic empowerment.

The G20 member countries must engage in comprehensive policy development to eradicate GBVF, including legal reforms, enhanced law enforcement training, and stricter penalties for perpetrators. Enhancing support services for survivors—such as shelters, counselling, and legal assistance—is critical. Public awareness campaigns to educate communities, challenge harmful gender norms, and promote gender equality are essential components of a holistic response.

Engaging men and boys is crucial in efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. Changing mindsets and behaviours among men is essential to effectively addressing GBVF. In November 2023, President Cyril Ramaphosa co-hosted the third meeting of African Heads of State on Positive Masculinity to end violence against women and girls, reaffirming the importance of involving men and boys as allies in preventing and eliminating discrimination and violence.

Preventing GBVF remains paramount. The EWWG must identify and share best practices on mitigation strategies, develop prevention policies, and ensure access to justice. By fostering collaboration and adopting a multifaceted approach, significant strides can be made in combating GBVF globally.

Key Deliverable:

A dialogue with G20 leaders on positive masculinity and their role in eliminating violence against women and girls. This could occur on the margins of the Leaders' Summit, with leaders signing a pledge of commitment.

3. PROPOSED KEY OUTCOMES

To maximise the impact of these priorities, South Africa aims to achieve the following key outcomes with G20 members, benefiting women, young women, and women with disabilities:

Strengthened Policies and Actions for Women's Economic Empowerment

The G20 members commit to implementing comprehensive policies that enhance women's economic empowerment through recognising and addressing unpaid care work, promoting financial inclusion—including access to land, properties, and assets—and leveraging technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to bridge gender gaps. This includes adopting support mechanisms like affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and targeted financial literacy programmes, as well as investing in technology to facilitate women's access to financial services and asset ownership.

Unified Commitment to Eradicate Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

The G20 leaders collectively pledge to intensify efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and femicide, implementing legal reforms, enhancing support services, and engaging men and boys as allies. The commitment includes utilising technology and AI to support survivors and prevent violence, sharing best practices on institutional coordination, and promoting positive masculinity. This unified stance aims to create safer societies for all women, particularly those vulnerable due to poverty and other intersecting factors.

Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange

Establishment of platforms for sharing best practices and successful models among G20 members and joint research projects and collaborative policy development.

4. CONCLUSION

By focusing on these critical priorities, South Africa aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable global economy, development, and growth. Addressing unpaid care work, enhancing financial inclusion—including access to land and assets—and combatting gender-based violence are essential steps towards empowering women, young women, and women with disabilities, particularly those affected by poverty.

Through collective commitment and action, G20 members can make significant strides in promoting gender equality and achieving sustainable development. Only then can we be seen as fostering solidarity and equality for sustainable development."