



Brasil 2024  
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## Global South G20 Presidencies: A Reform and Development Agenda

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## Reflection on Context

The G20 (at Summit Level) emerged as a response to the 2008 global financial crisis. The impact of this crisis has underlined the stark global inequality in multilateral institutions and the precarity that rising unsustainable debt imposes on developing economies. The G20 was established to combat economic and financial crises and work in coordination to avoid crises. To this end, until the November 2008 Summit, it had been pitched at the Finance Ministerial and Central Bank Governor level since its formation in 1999. Since its inaugural summit at the heads of state and government level, it has become the ‘premier forum for global economic cooperation (OECD),’ ‘the main forum for international economic cooperation (G20, Brazil),’ and the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues (G20, India)’.

In the midst of a changing geopolitical landscape, the G20 2024 takes place in the same year as the adoption of the Pact for the Future (PFTF) on 22 September 2024 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and contains many affirmations of the objects of the Brazil G20 priorities, India G20 priorities and South Africa’s G20 priorities (press.un.org). Additionally, the recently adopted Pact for the Future (POTF) requires institutions that are fit for purpose to implement its provisions, such as:

*“b) Request the Secretary-General to undertake a review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations, taking into account lessons learned from previous and ongoing reform processes, and provide strategic and action-oriented*

*recommendations for the consideration of Member States on how the United Nations toolbox can be adapted to meet evolving needs, to allow for more agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging and future challenges; (POTF, 2024, Action 21)”.*

The United Nations (UN) toolbox includes the UN Security Council (UNSC), among others, in the whole system. This is particularly important because, like the United States (US), many have argued for permanent spaces for Africa in the UNSC, and unlike the US, President Lula, at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) 2024, has argued for permanent seats for Latin America. A reformed UNSC includes membership, operations, and accountability, amongst other reforms, to ensure its credibility and legitimacy.

The POTF also lists other imperatives of a reformed multilateralism, particularly relevant for the Global South and for urgent implementation, which the G20 ought to play its role to see through, such as the following,

- “(a) Scale up our efforts towards the full implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda 7 and the Paris Agreement;
- (b) Fully implement the commitments in the political declaration agreed at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023;
- (c) Mobilize significant and adequate resources and investments from all sources for sustainable development;
- (d) Remove all obstacles to sustainable development and refrain from economic coercion. (A/RES/79/1 2024, 4)”.

## Task Force 6

The G20 exists precisely to address many of the challenges and see to the attainment of the ends of the PFTF because of the extent of the influence and power of its members, both individually and collectively. While much remains to be done to implement the PFTF and attain much-wanted reform and development, Task Force 6 of Brazil T20 2024 identified challenges to today's multilateralism and made several recommendations. The first two are selected for discussion.

### **1. Strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral institutions by building trust, accountability, and inclusion.**

**Case:** Confidence in this design for global governance has waned, and plenty of recorded arguments have been made about this effect. It is perhaps for this reason that plurilateralism, bilateralism, trilateralism, and other cooperation 'isms' have emerged out of the ineffectiveness of governance in attending to challenges facing the global population. Global solidarity is needed to attain the development that the POTF and successive G20 declarations have pledged, especially for the Global South. The condition of multilateralism today under which Global South presidencies of the G20 are very complex and heavy. Yet the expectations on them by the global population are so high. Calls for rewriting the UN charter have already begun to be heard, especially for actual reforms of the UNSC beyond the mere inclusion of two African members. They are heavy because the ends of the UN Charter have not been met, to devastating consequences.

Today's multilateralism and global governance architecture owe their design and

evolution to the ideas of the victors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Other developments shaping its internal workings or culture would have been greatly influenced by the following Cold War. It is a multilateralism designed by those with power and, at the time, joined by about 46 other states. Today, the UN has a membership of 193, with new rising powers and an increasingly influential Global South, and its design has not changed. The 1945 design needs reform to tally with today's realities and the needs of the future.

Like Brazil, India, and Indonesia before them, the successive Global South G20 Presidencies made repeated calls to resolve the unsustainable debt hindering the prospects of developing economies. They have repeated calls to attend to the unfair debt servicing/borrowing costs imposed on them, compared to that of advanced economies, up to 12 times in some cases (UNDP, A World of Debt Report, 2024), and to illicit financial flows. In their overwhelming numbers, developing economies voted for the UN global convention on taxation. For this, among other reasons. The resolution A/C.2/78/L.18/Rev.1, adopted last year at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of UNGA, “*tabled by the African Group under the title: “Promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation at the United Nations (www.au.int, 2023)”*”.

**What is to be done?** All these issues require a solid and fit-for-purpose institutional architecture of global governance and cooperation. *Task Force 06 recommends establishing a permanent Task Force on UN Reform within the G20 Sherpa track (Brazil T20 TF6, 2024)*. This will allow regularised deliberation and negotiation among the most influential, whose influence is the reason for establishing the G20, to negotiate and rally the global community toward a permanent solution. To this end, in addition to advocating for coordination and alignment across the UN system for the improvement of the trading regime, global financial architecture, and peacebuilding, “Task Force 06 recommends

that the G20 could advocate for urgent reforms to multilateral institutions that reflect the evolving international order (Brazil T20 TF6, 2024).” The G20 is called upon to use its collective strength to push for a fit-for-purpose global governance institutional architecture, including the G20.

## **2. Strengthen global governance through increased participation of non-state and subnational actors.**

**Case:** High on the priority of the PFTF is the need to address inequality, injustice, poverty eradication, and the attainment of human dignity for all through development. The G20 has evolved in scope and public expectation, including seeking solutions for all global challenges. The eradication of food poverty and the attainment of adequate Human Development Index scores for all could go a long way to help with the extent of violence, extremism, and other security challenges too. To this end, the involvement of non-state actors in the policy process at the multilateral level by local actors, “*Task Force 06 likewise urges the G20 to consider amplifying the participation of cities and other local and regional governments and related networks (Brazil T20 TF6, 2024).*”

**What is to be done?** It is important to remember how India and Brazil, the nearest Global South predecessors of the South African G20 Presidency 2025, and the OECD view the forum. It is important because a Global South G20 Presidency is unique in how much is expected from them to advance developing economies' plight and aspirations. It is also important to consider the OECD views on the G20 because the “US and EU quickly established the institutional architecture of the G20 (Litman, 2017, p 22)” in response to the crisis while shock gripped the multilateral system. It is important because people's lives and reality are constantly impacted by decisions and choices made in spaces

far beyond their reach by an institutional architecture and infrastructure whose legitimacy is now under question (HLAB Report, 2024). Therefore, it would be helpful to consider that “to strengthen more inclusive multilateralism, the G20 could prioritize enhancing the participation of non-state actors in the Sherpa and Financial tracks " (Brazil T20 TF6 2024).”

Task Force 6 has had the responsibility to consider ideas on reforms of multilateralism and to reflect on nearly all topical areas of human endeavor because, at a global level, they are impacted by multilateralism as much as multilateralism impacts them. **Task Force 6 of T20 Brazil 2024** was concerned with promoting ‘comprehensive discussions on reforms to establish a more effective, legitimate, inclusive, and accountable global governance system.’ This approach encouraged innovative solutions to advance sustainable development goals and foster stronger multilateral cooperation for the planet and the people. For this purpose, it is helpful to consider and reflect on its work and take the discussion and action forward.

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