T20 Brasil

Task Force 06 Statement

TF06

Strengthening multilateralism and global governance

T20

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Let's rethink the world

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Introduction to the Task Force's mission and priorities

The global transition toward a more multipolar system is generating a range of overlapping and cascading political, economic, and social tensions. Combined with climate change and digital transformation, the transition is contributing to increasing geopolitical volatility and uncertainty. It is also slowing progress on shared international objectives ranging from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the Paris Agreement. Faced with multiple interconnected systemic risks, global cooperation is more urgent than ever.

Collective action on shared challenges requires building understanding, trust, and reciprocity. Yet these fundamentals of multilateral cooperation are in short supply owing to intensifying competition, deepening inequality, and the inability of institutions, including the United Nations (UN), to anticipate, manage and recover from global crises. Revitalizing and reimagining multilateralism in a fragmented world is essential. This will require listening to and incorporating perspectives from the Global South and transitioning to more networked and inclusive forms of international cooperation. The G20 provides a critical opportunity to positively and proactively align efforts.

The T20 Brasil Task Force 06 prioritized the building of a shared understanding of international challenges. It also developed several recommendations to comprehensively address them. Task Force 06 members recognize that a reinvigorated multilateral system, better equipped to confront systemic risks and threats, should prioritize the

well-being of people and the planet, ensure inclusivity, promote fairness and cooperation, allocate sufficient resources, increase its agility and embrace adaptability, ensure accountability and transparency, and stay focused on core mission and values.

To this end, Task Force 06 focused on the following subtopics:

1. The G20 role in strengthening multilateralism and UN reform;

2. Reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO);

3. Global health issues and the One Health approach;

4. New norms and metrics for international development cooperation and confronting global challenges;

5. The role of non-state actors, NGOs, and subnational units in multilateral governance;

6. Assessing G20 pledges and actions;

7. The voices of the Global South in global governance and in strengthening multilateralism.

2 Diagnosis of main problems

The world is experiencing a polycrisis characterized by interconnected and cascading geopolitical, geoeconomic, and climatic challenges. Task Force 06 co-leads, subtopic chairs, and policy brief authors underlined the high level of complexity and interdependence of systemic risks. Of particular concern is the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Task Force 06 singled out other related challenges: the rising risk of pandemics; deepening economic inequalities and poverty; persistently high debt, shrinking fiscal space, and financial instability; and the growing incidence of international and internal armed conflict. Many of these themes are front and center of both Finance and Sherpa tracks of the Brazilian presidency of the G20, underlining the critical importance of global governance reform.

The sheer scale and speed of the unfolding polycrisis reinforce the importance of restoring trust in more networked, inclusive, and effective multilateralism, including the importance of bolstering existing international institutions. Despite its limitations, the UN remains indispensable on matters of promoting peace and security, advancing human rights and humanitarian action, and ensuring sustainable development. To avoid a descent into populism, isolationism, and protectionism, it is crucial to make more effective use of the UN's convening power and its multiple fora, mechanisms, tools, and expertise. The comparative advantages of the Bretton Woods institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO)

and other multilateral fora such as the G20, must be leveraged rather than side-stepped.

Task Force 06 underlined the danger of adopting a "business as usual approach" to address evolving global challenges. Policy papers stressed that multidimensional and multi-jurisdictional threats and risks require collaborative action that transcend national borders and financial instruments that accelerate, and also move beyond, overseas development assistance. There are significant and persistent investment shortfalls to build resilience. Moreover, efforts to deploy solutions at scale are impeded by outdated financial instruments, uneven technology transfer, erratic domestic adaptation, and a lack of investable projects and blended finance to seed early-stage ventures promoting sustainable development. Redressing these limitations will require substantial investments from governments, MDBs, philanthropies, and the private sector. The United Nations Secretary-General's (UNSG) High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism has likewise underscored the urgency of addressing these and other challenges.[1]

Despite rising geopolitical competition, Task Force 06 stresses the need to rapidly increase synergies across global multilateral fora. The G20, together with the UN, can help strengthen regional, national and subnational coalitions and other forms of multi-alignment to address global challenges and advance shared goals. To date, efforts to match and expand synergetic initiatives are still timid. Task Force 06 noted opportunities to amplify the discussions of initiatives such as the Green Development Pact from G20 India and the current Global Mobilization Against Climate Change from G20 Brazil, including with other fora such as the BRICS+, the Summit of the Future in 2024, and COP30.

Reframing and reinforcing multilateral action to address the externalities of a rapidly changing international order also demands

1. High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism. "A Breakthrough for People and Planet." https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/

opening up to new partners, including non-state actors. The existing structure of the multilateral system still limits multi-stakeholder collaboration, particularly of powerful private, philanthropic and non-governmental actors. Task Force 06 members have stressed how building trust, inclusion, reciprocity, and legitimacy within the multilateral system requires significant engagement of a broad spectrum of actors, including civil society from the local to the regional level. Reforms proposed by the G20 must ensure that the global system is equipped to effectively integrate diverse and strategic contributions from a wider bandwidth of stakeholders than is currently the case.

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Key recommendations

The G20 plays a critical role as an international hub to advocate for and advance reforms. It has the potential to act as a nexus for mission- and values-driven agendas and initiatives, while positively contributing to addressing the fundamental challenges of multilateralism and global governance. Based on the main inputs from 51 policy briefs and on the conversations and exchanges held among members in the process, Task Force 06 makes the following recommendations.

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

To be more effective and efficient in a changing world, global governance must become more inclusive, networked, and accountable. This can be facilitated by ensuring data-driven and evidence-based decision-making on crucial global issues and agreeing to a code of conduct on inclusive multilateral processes. Task Force 06 recommends establishing a permanent Task Force on UN Reform within the G20 Sherpa track. In addition to facilitating dialogue and sharing of ideas, such a platform could provide a mechanism for consensus-building on necessary and high-priority UN system reforms over the long-term.

Task Force 06 recommends that the G20 could advocate for urgent reforms to multilateral institutions that reflect the evolving international order. One prominent example is the expansion of the UN Security Council to account for underrepresented regions and developing countries, guided by principles of equity, legitimacy, and

modernization.[2] The G20 can support the alignment of policy priorities across UN agencies, organizations and processes in order to reduce frictions generated by trade rules and regulations for sustainable development. The G20 could also endorse the UNSG's proposal for a Biennial Summit to consider opportunities and address discrepancies in regulations governing finance, aid, climate action, and wider sustainable development concerns.

Given the rising geopolitical tensions in many parts of the world, including large-scale militarization and modernization of nuclear arsenals, the G20 could also commit to advocating for more attention to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For example, Task Force 06 members recommend that the G20 call for the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission, by enhancing its advisory role to the Security Council and Economic and Social Council and reinforcing its capabilities for conflict prevention. What is more, the G20 could discuss more ambitious nuclear non-proliferation commitments, invest in new technologies and research and development to address humanitarian challenges, and leverage its brokering and agenda-setting capacity to elevate action on social protection and human rights, ensuring state compliance with commitments.

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

In order to strengthen more inclusive multilateralism, the G20 could prioritize enhancing the participation of non-state actors in the Sherpa and Financial tracks. A goal could be to improve collaboration and legitimacy, including but not limited to the existing engagement groups. Structured technical exchanges can also serve an advisory function for the G20's official tracks. Facilitating technical and financial support for building and strengthening institutional capacity among non-state actors is essential to ensure genuine participation.

2. High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB), *A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future* (New York: United Nations University, 2023), https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/pdf/56892_UNU_HLAB_report_Final_LOWRES.pdf.

Task Force 06 also recommends leveraging digital tools and platforms to further involve stakeholders in the G20 and UN processes. Digital transformation has afforded a tremendous array of new means and modes of communication, including for developing, sharing and testing ideas and translation for under-represented and serviced groups. The G20 could actively strengthen civil society participation, including during consultations and in other fora, enhancing both transparency and inclusivity. Interactive and digitally-enabled dialogue with civil society can be a regular and low-cost feature of formal G20 and UN sessions.

Task Force 06 likewise urges the G20 to consider amplifying the participation of cities and other local and regional governments and related networks. Subnational actors are pivotal for addressing a host of systemic risks including climate change, digital exclusion, and inequalities. This is particularly the case when it comes to issues such as protecting the environment, promoting global health, and achieving sustainable development. Local and regional governments could be considered for more direct involvement in multilateral treaty processes, similar to private sector engagement initiatives.

3. Improve global cooperation and investments for climate-resilient development, including through reforms of the financial architecture.

The G20 should advance a comprehensive reform agenda for International Financial Institutions and strengthen multilateral development banks (MDBs) for sustainable finance. Task Force 6 members urge the G20 to promote "just ecological transition plans" and accelerate the global energy transition away from fossil fuels. This requires commitments in terms of financial resources, knowledge transfer, and sharing of technologies to ensure sustainable development in the developing world. To this end, the G20 can champion equitable, sustainable carbon and biodiversity markets, payment for ecosystem services, and advocate for innovative financing mechanisms for protecting tropical forests in particular.

Task Force 06 members urge the G20 to establish a sub-working group under the Trade and Investment Working Group to collaborate with WTO's TESSD process on environmental trade measures. G20 members can also commit to actions such as phasing out fuel subsidies and reducing tariffs on sustainable alternatives, while increasing transparency and trust in phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. Moreover, transforming the governance of international financial institutions to be more representative and inclusive is crucial, as are sustainable, future-proof policies that encompass the rights of children and future generations in G20 communiqués.

4. Strengthen governance to ensure timely and efficient responses to frontier threats related to global health, digital harms and transnational organized crime.

The G20 has a critical role to play in shaping the multilateral agenda on near and longer-term global threats. Task Force 06 recommended that the G20 adopt a more proactive posture to build collective understanding and responses to systemic risks related to pandemics, digital harms, and transnational organized crime. All three sets of challenges are international in nature and represent a severe threat to peace and security, financial stability, and sustainable development. The G20 can identify shared priorities with other international and regional fora, including strengthening common action and partnerships.

To address the transnational threat of pandemics, the G20 can foster a One Health approach. Such an approach emphasizes the harmonious integration of humans, animals, and the environment. Task Force 06 members recommend that the G20 promote international standards of sanitation, animal health, and environmental biodiversity protection across supply and production chains. The G20 could also propose a governance mechanism to coordinate One Health efforts across sectors, thereby enabling timely responses to emerging health threats that are growing ever more urgent.

Given the rapid expansion of organized crime in all parts of the world, the G20 could reinforce the importance of collective approaches to detecting, disrupting and dismantling key networks. Task Force 06 members note that the G20 could play a pivotal role in bridging trust and cooperation deficits to address cyber, counterfeit, financial, and trafficking-related crimes that cross jurisdictions, including by sharing intelligence, supporting joint investigations, expanding monitoring and enforcement against illicit flows, strengthening critical infrastructure, and reinforcing international conventions related to organized crime and cybercrime, with due consideration of human rights.

In light of major risks posed by advanced AI, the G20 could also advocate for standards and verification systems to ensure safe, aligned and ethical design, development and deployment. Task Force 06 members drew attention to the need to close the AI gap — in both capabilities and regulation — between the Global North and South. The G20 Digital Economy Working Group can define principles for strengthening safe, ethical and aligned AI, as well as necessary investments in infrastructure, closing skills gaps, and minimizing digital harms.

5. Advance new norms and metrics for development cooperation and enhancing G20 accountability.

The G20 leaders should commit to advancing new metrics of wellbeing that move beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Specifically, Task Force 06 members urge the G20 to align measures of progress with parallel UN initiatives and endorse their adoption at the Summit of the Future. These metrics can practically guide policy, financial and service allocation decisions, and concessional finance, grounded in ethical, holistic, sustainable, and inclusive parameters. The G20 can simultaneously support efforts to enhance data capacities and develop tools at the country level to address global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, digital governance and food insecurity.

Given the urgency of the climate change crisis, the G20 should take a more proactive stance on phasing out fossil fuels. Task Force 06 recommends that G20 countries set ambitious renewable energy targets, phase out fossil fuel subsidies, invest in worker reskilling and establish social safety nets as part of their adaptation strategies, foster clean energy innovation, and support developing nations to these objectives. To improve accountability, the G20 can also publicly release meeting agendas and minutes, create an independent review mechanism to track pledges, develop clear progress metrics, and expand collaboration with international organizations.

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