



Engaging the G20 to further climate and energy agendas in Africa

Pathways for political parties

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In a rapidly changing global landscape, Africa stands at the forefront of climate and energy impacts and debates, with the unprecedented opportunity to help shape the world's future through its new permanent seat at the G20.

The African Union's membership signals a new era, where the continent's priorities, resources, innovations, and leadership can, and must, inform and influence international policy.

This Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) toolkit offers timely guidance for political leaders, strategists, and advisors seeking to engage the G20 more effectively, ensuring that Africa's voice is not only heard, but drives meaningful change. The toolkit comes on the back of nearly 10 years of working with governing and opposition political parties in the SADC region on energy and water policy in the face of climate change.

As the need for climate adaptation, energy transition, and sustainable development grows ever more urgent, coordinated African engagement with the G20 can unlock transformative potential for our countries and communities. By leveraging the toolkit provided herein, African leaders can navigate the complexities of global governance and forge pathways that reflect our continent's ambitions, potential and unique perspectives.

I encourage readers to use this resource boldly, fostering collaborative, multi-party action and visionary leadership that will benefit Africa, and the world, for generations to come. Now is our time in history to show the way forward.

Olmo von Meijenfeldt
Executive Director

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to equip political leaders, parliamentary actors, party strategists, and government advisors with the knowledge, tools, and practical entry points they need to meaningfully influence G20 outcomes in support of Africa's priorities.

African political leaders have a unique and timely opportunity to shape global climate and energy debates through the G20, now that the African Union has secured permanent membership in this influential forum. This toolkit is designed to equip political leaders, parliamentary actors, party strategists, and government advisors with the knowledge, tools, and practical entry points they need to meaningfully influence G20 outcomes in support of Africa's priorities.

The G20 is not a traditional multilateral institution. While it has no binding authority, it sets the tone for global economic and climate governance, influences the direction of multilateral development banks, and shapes financing flows that affect every African country. Decisions made at the G20 can either accelerate Africa's clean energy transitions, unlock climate finance, and support resilient development or reinforce existing inequalities. African political leadership therefore matters deeply: well-coordinated domestic, regional, and continental engagement can amplify Africa's voice and ensure global decisions reflect Africa's needs, interests, and visions for sustainable development.

Specifically, the toolkit supports political leaders to:

- Understand how the G20 works, including its Sherpa and Finance Tracks, working groups, and engagement groups.
- Analyse key climate and energy decisions made by the G20 to date, and the implications for Africa.
- Navigate three main pathways for influence: advancing national positions, mobilising regional and continental bodies, and convening multi-stakeholder processes that strengthen Africa's negotiation power.
- Draw on real, proven examples from African parliaments, climate commissions, regional economic communities, and continental institutions to inform strategy and action.

The toolkit is designed for practical use. Each pathway includes:

- Clear political entry points.
- Concrete actions leaders can take.
- Guidelines tailored to African political contexts.
- Illustrative case studies.
- Opportunities for coordination with AU and G20 processes.

With South Africa's G20 Presidency behind us, African political leadership will play a decisive role in shaping continental and global climate outcomes. This toolkit helps leaders seize this moment by strengthening Africa's climate diplomacy, advancing just and equitable energy transitions, and ensuring Africa's priorities shape the global governance landscape.

Scope & Applicability

While this toolkit focuses specifically on climate engagement within the G20, it should not be read as limited to the G20 alone. Rather, the G20 is used as a practical entry point through which African political parties can explore, test, and strengthen approaches to engaging with complex multilateral governance processes.

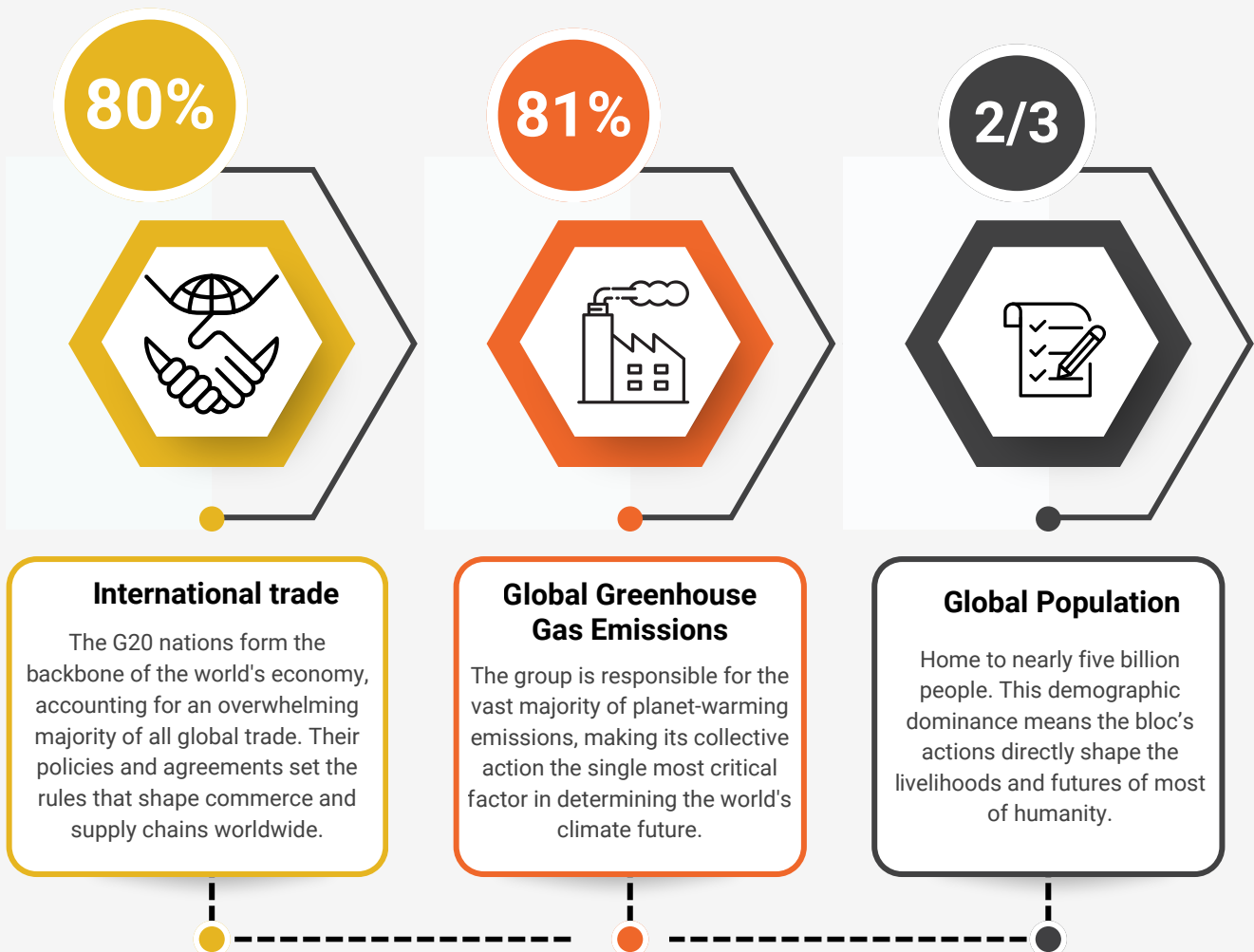
The concepts, tools, and approaches outlined in this toolkit are designed to be transferable and adaptable across a wide range of multilateral platforms beyond the G20, including continental, regional, and global forums such as the African Union, United Nations system, climate negotiations (including COP processes), international financial institutions, BRICS, and regional economic communities. By focusing on political party roles, electoral cycles, policy development processes, and accountability mechanisms, the toolkit seeks to strengthen the procedural, institutional, and political capacity of African political parties and political systems more broadly. As African countries deepen their engagement in multilateral decision-making, these tools can support more coherent, inclusive, and strategically grounded participation on the global stage, regardless of the specific forum involved.

In this sense, the toolkit should be understood not as a prescriptive guide to G20 engagement alone, but as a capacity-building resource for enhancing African political party engagement in multilateral governance more generally, with climate action as a central, cross-cutting policy domain.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING THE G20 INFRASTRUCTURE & PROCESSES

What is the G20?

The G20 (Group of Twenty) is a forum of the world's largest and most influential economies, including 19 countries, the European Union, and African Union. Together, they account for roughly two-thirds of the global population, 80% of international trade, and a significant portion of global greenhouse gas emissions.



The G20 meets regularly to coordinate economic, financial, and policy strategies on issues that transcend national borders, from trade and investment to energy, climate change, and development. While the G20 does not have formal legislative authority, its decisions and recommendations shape global priorities, set the tone for international finance, and influence the policies of other countries and multilateral institutions. This makes it a critical platform for African political parties and governments to advocate for policies that support equitable climate finance, just energy transitions, infrastructure development, and debt relief. All of these issues are essential for Africa's sustainable development, and the G20 platform is particularly well placed to address these.

Importantly, Africa's engagement with the G20 is both a diplomatic and strategic opportunity. By presenting a unified and evidence-based agenda, African leaders can influence global conversations, secure resources, and ensure that the continent's climate and development needs are recognised and acted upon.

G20 history, structure and bodies

The G20 has two parallel tracks: The Sherpa Track, led by personal representatives of the leaders of G20 countries to negotiate summit agendas and coordinate work, and the Finance Track, led by Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss macroeconomic and financial issues.

While the Sherpa Track handles broader policy and agenda-setting, the Finance Track focuses on concrete financial and economic policies, but both tracks must align to ensure the G20's goal of sustainable global growth.



In the Sherpa Track, Sherpas, who are personal representatives of the G20 leaders, negotiate and coordinate the substantive work of the G20 and discusses agenda items for the Leaders' Summit. For South Africa's presidency, this was the Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr. Zane Dangor. Under the Sherpa Track, working groups are established to focus on specific areas like Environment, Climate & Sustainability (ECSWG), Energy, Infrastructure, Health, Digitalization, and more.

These groups research issues, develop recommendations, and report to the Leaders' Summit. They often include expert representatives from multiple sectors. The G20 Sherpa will also recognise several official engagement groups made up of networks of experts from civil society, youth, business, and parliamentarians that feed ideas into the G20 process. Examples include T20 (Think Tanks), B20 (Business), P20 (Parliamentarians), C20 (Civil Society), Y20 (Youth).

SHERPA TRACK



Shaping the G20's development and social agenda

The Sherpa track provides the political and policy framing for global development priorities.



Coordinating multi-stakeholder and engagement group inputs

Sherpas act as the primary interface between governments and G20 Engagement Groups (such as C20, B20, T20, W20, Y20), ensuring that civil society, business, think tanks, and labour perspectives are reflected in leaders' declarations and action plans.



Negotiating leaders' commitments and consensus language

The Sherpa Track is responsible for negotiating text for G20 declarations, action plans, and outcome documents, translating technical discussions into political commitments that leaders can endorse.

FINANCE TRACK

Tool & Access Preparation

Oversees discussions on sovereign debt relief, multilateral development bank reform, climate finance, and mechanisms to mobilise capital for development and resilience in emerging and developing economies.



Steering global macroeconomic coordination and financial stability

Coordinates responses to global economic risks, debt vulnerabilities, inflation, and financial stability, including reforms of the international financial architecture.



Setting technical standards and financial policy directions

Develops technical agreements on taxation (e.g. international tax cooperation), sustainable finance frameworks, financial regulation, and financial inclusion, shaping the rules and norms of the global financial system.

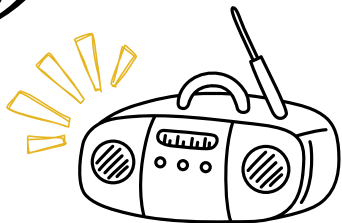


Led by finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the member countries, the finance track collaborates on policies related to sustainable growth, financial inclusion, and tackling emerging risks. For South Africa's presidency, the National Treasury and the South African Reserve Bank led this track. The Finance Track deals with macroeconomic and financial issues, such as international financial architecture, infrastructure development, and international taxation. Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors meet several times a year to focus on global economic stability, debt issues, and investment flows.

The success of the G20 depends on the alignment and collaboration between the Sherpa and Finance tracks. Both tracks share the common mission of enabling sustainable, resilient, and inclusive global growth.

G20 4 WHAT?

Hey, Siba! Did you hear on the radio something about the G20? What is that thing? A new lotto game?



The G20 is like a big WhatsApp group for the 20 most powerful countries in the world.



"They meet every year to talk about money, climate change, jobs—big stuff that affects all of us!"



Ohhh! So, it's like a global stokvel?



Kind of!
The rich countries bring their wallets...



...and also a lot of opinions.




SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE ACTION AT THE G20

G20 climate and sustainability action has evolved from peripheral discussions to a central focus, with early steps including the 2009 commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. Key milestones include reaffirming commitment to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, establishing the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group in 2017, and recent focus on large-scale investment needs and specific areas like the circular economy, ocean health, and forest protection.

Despite improvements in pledges, there is a large gap between the emissions reductions G20 countries have committed to and the level needed to limit warming to 1.5°C or 2°C and meet the Paris Agreement.¹ Critical areas for climate policy, such as phasing out coal and oil, mandating energy reductions, and reducing industrial process emissions, have seen low adoption rates among G20 members. In addition, there is a gap between stated commitments and actual implementation, with many policies lacking the urgency needed to effectively address climate change.

Africa's developing economies require more access to new, additional, and predictable finance (both grant and concessional) to support their climate action and adaptation efforts. A recent analysis by the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) with the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) found that adaptation finance to Africa rose from US\$6.3 billion in 2017 to US\$14.8 billion in 2023, but the estimated need is about US\$70 billion per annum just based on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).² There is also an "insurance-protection gap" for climate-vulnerable countries, and a need for scaled-up investment in adaptation measures and infrastructure. While exact figures are less frequently reported for Africa alone, studies highlight that very little private-insurance and risk-transfer coverage exists for climate-vulnerable countries, meaning many shocks go uninsured or under-insured. For example, one piece indicates "close to 80% of adaptation finance in Africa comes from loans or government budgets" which tend to increase debt burdens rather than reduce risks.

Even with available funds, a key gap exists in ensuring that investments are correctly targeted to build resilience, address vulnerabilities, and develop in-country capacity. While initiatives like the Data Gaps Initiative aim to improve data on climate, the current level of detail and timeliness is not yet adequate for fully understanding and tackling the complex challenges. While the G20 serves as a forum for discussion, a gap remains in ensuring a truly coordinated and integrated approach across all member states to address environmental and climate challenges. According to CPI's "Landscape of Climate Finance in Africa" (2024): climate-finance flows in Africa grew to about US\$44 billion in 2021/2022 (up ~48% from previous years) yet remain only a fraction of what's required. 12



South Africa is the only African country in the group—so we **MUST** represent the African continent!

But the African Union is also there now...so maybe Africa will have a bigger voice!

The G20 has no legal or legislative authority

The G20 is not a treaty-based organisation and has no formal law-making power. Unlike national parliaments or bodies such as the WTO, it cannot pass binding rules, regulations, or statutes that countries are legally required to follow.

G20 outcomes are political commitments, not legal obligations

G20 declarations, communiqués, and action plans are non-binding. They represent political agreement and shared intent among leaders and ministers, but carry no enforcement mechanism or legal sanction if countries do not comply.

Implementation happens through existing institutions

The G20 typically asks other bodies to develop rules, standards, or financing instruments, such as:

- Multilateral Development Banks (finance and debt reform)
- Financial Stability Board (financial regulation)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (climate commitments)

Early developments (pre-2015)

- 2009: Climate became a topic of discussion, leading to the commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.
- 2015: G20 members reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement, adopted in the same year, to limit global warming.

Recent developments (2024)

- 2024: The Rio Leaders' Declaration renewed commitments to net-zero goals, forest and ocean protection, and a more circular and inclusive global economy. The Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) continued its work on issues like waste management and marine spatial planning.

Increased focus and formalisation (2017-2023)

- 2017: The Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group was established
- 2018: The group focused on sustainable infrastructure, aiming for a harmonised definition of "sustainable infrastructure" that includes low-carbon approaches and climate resilience.
- 2023: The new Delhi Declaration, under the Indian G20 Presidency, included a commitment to tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030.

South African G20 Presidency Declaration (2025)

- Positions Just Energy Transitions as a scalable development model, not just a pilot approach, linking climate action to jobs, industrialisation, and social protection.
- Signals a shift away from debt-heavy climate finance
- Debt constraints are explicitly recognised as a barrier to climate action
- Adaptation and loss and damage are elevated as core development priorities alongside mitigation.
- Reinforces inclusive and democratic climate governance, emphasising participation by labour, communities, and civil society.
- It advances a nature-climate convergence, integrating biodiversity, land use, and food systems into economic resilience strategies.

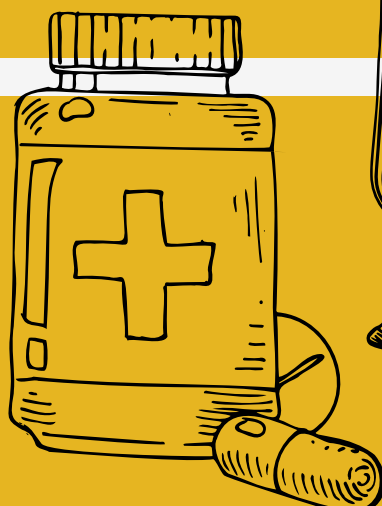


But what do they do at this G20?

They make agreements to fix world problems like food prices, cost of electricity...



They don't make laws, but their decisions influence everything—even the price of cooking oil at the spaza!



SECTION 3: WHAT POLITICAL PARTIES CAN DO

PATHWAY 1

Political leaders can play a strategic role in shaping how their governments feed into the AU's G20 agenda, particularly through parliamentary and committee mechanisms.

Practical Action 1.1: Use parliamentary steering committees or relevant parliamentary subcommittees to influence national climate and finance priorities, ensuring these perspectives feed into the AU Commission on Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE), and the Commission on Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, Industry, Mining (ETTİM).

Experiences from COP engagement across Africa show that structured, multi-sectoral processes at the national level can inform global platforms. For example, Kenya's National Dialogue on Climate Finance (2023) involved the Ministry of Environment, Parliament's Budget Committee, and CSOs like Power Shift Africa to define Kenya's position ahead of COP28. Recommendations on climate debt relief and adaptation funding were later echoed by the African Group of Negotiators (AGN). Ghana's Climate Ambition Forum (2022) convened by the Ministry of Finance and the Ghana Climate Innovation Centre aligned climate finance needs with national development priorities, showing how national multi-sectoral coordination can feed into continental strategies.

Guidelines for political leaders:

- Map relevant actors: Identify key parliamentary committees (e.g., budget, environment, energy, foreign affairs), allied ministries, and influential CSOs, youth movements, and think tanks working on climate and finance policy.
- Shape the agenda: Focus parliamentary discussions on defining national priorities that can feed into AU and G20 positions, such as domestic barriers to climate finance access, adaptation investment needs, or just transition strategies.
- Ensure inclusivity: Advocate for input from subnational actors, women's groups, and local government associations to ensure policy reflects diverse realities and financing needs.
- Link outputs to continental processes: Draft or endorse a national "Climate and Finance Position Paper" through parliamentary resolutions or committee reports, which can be submitted via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or SEBE for integration into AU G20 inputs.
- Track impact: Set up a parliamentary task team or monitoring mechanism to follow whether national priorities are reflected in AU statements or G20 communiqués, and adjust advocacy accordingly.



So how can we get involved? Its not like the big G20 bosses are going to call me to ask "Sis Grace, what should G20 presidents care about!"

But we can still influence them!



There are special groups—

...like the C20 (for civil society), W20 (for women), and Y20 (for youth)

Where people like us can speak up, share what we want from our governments!



Practical Action 1.2: Table Parliamentary Motions or Policy Resolutions to Align National Climate Plans with Continental G20 Priorities

Parliamentary motions have been used across the continent to amplify climate action. For example, the Parliament of Uganda adopted a motion urging the integration of climate change across all budget lines and development planning processes. South Africa also held Parliamentary Hearings on the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP, 2023) where MPs reviewed how national plans correspond to G20 and AU priorities on climate finance and equitable transitions, influencing the country's negotiation stance with international partners. In India, the country's Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change (G20 Presidency, 2023) demonstrated how legislative engagement can shape national and global climate positions; its recommendations on concessional finance and technology transfer fed into the G20 Leaders' Declaration. African parliaments can replicate this model under the AU's G20 membership.

Guidelines for political parties:

- **Audit alignment:** Review national climate plans such as NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) and LTS (Long-Term Strategies) to identify where they align or diverge from AU and G20 priorities (e.g., just transitions, climate finance architecture reform, debt-for-climate swaps etc).
- **Build cross-party support:** Work with parliamentary committees (environment, finance, foreign affairs) and across party lines to co-sponsor motions. Climate diplomacy should be treated as a national (not partisan) priority.
- **Anchor motions in evidence:** Use data from reliable sources such as the African Development Bank, Global Center on Adaptation, Afrobarometer, African Centre for Climate and Development and Climate Policy Initiative to demonstrate funding gaps and justify proposed reforms.
- **Tie resolutions to national budgeting:** Encourage governments to reflect G20-aligned priorities in budget frameworks e.g., increasing adaptation spending or setting up mechanisms to access G20 climate finance commitments.
- **Publicise outcomes:** Share adopted motions with the AU SEBE and regional blocs (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC) to ensure upward policy coherence.



Yoh, imagine our community ideas reaching global leaders!



Exactly! The G20 may be big, but it needs our small voices to stay grounded.



Influence happens through agenda-setting and coordination

Even without law-making power, the G20 is highly influential because it:

- Sets global policy priorities (e.g. climate finance, debt relief, energy transition)
- Aligns major economies around common narratives and norms
- Coordinates responses to global crises (financial instability, pandemics, climate shocks)

Many G20 ideas later become law elsewhere—for example through:

- National legislation
- Multilateral treaties
- Reforms in institutions like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund

Practical Action 1.3: Push for Multi-Party Consensus Statements Ahead of Key G20 Milestones

An examples of this kind of action, includes Brazil's Multi-Party Declaration before COP27 (2022). Political parties across the spectrum (PT, PSDB, Rede Sustentabilidade) issued a joint call for greater South-South cooperation on climate finance. This approach can be replicated by African parties for G20 engagements. In South Africa, Cross-Party Endorsement of the Paris Agreement (2016) which saw the ANC, DA, and EFF jointly supporting South Africa's ratification, demonstrated how climate issues can transcend partisanship when linked to national interest. At a regional level, ahead of COP28, African MPs adopted a resolution calling for scaled-up adaptation of finance and climate justice. This African Parliamentarians' Climate Statement (Pan-African Parliament, 2023) provided a template for G20-aligned consensus statements coordinated through the AU.

Guidelines for political leaders:

- Set the timeline: Identify the G20 calendar including key meetings like Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors (April/July), Working Group meetings, and the Leaders' Summit (November/December). Plan consensus statements 4–6 weeks ahead of each milestone.
- Agree on core messages: Draft concise joint statements emphasising shared African priorities: climate finance reform, adaptation, loss and damage, just transitions, and debt relief.
- Coordinate through regional party networks: Use platforms such as the African Liberal Network (ALN), Democrats Alliance of Africa (DAA), or Socialist International Africa Committee to ensure statements reflect diverse political traditions while maintaining unity of purpose.
- Leverage the AU and media: Submit consensus statements to the AU Commission and share them publicly to shape continental narratives ahead of G20 negotiations.
- Maintain continuity: Establish a standing "African Political Parties G20 Caucus" to issue statements regularly and monitor follow-up commitments.



Using Electoral Cycles to Strengthen African Political Party Engagement with Multilateral Platforms

Why Electoral Cycles Matter for Multilateral Engagement

African political parties increasingly operate in a world where critical decisions affecting development, debt, climate finance, trade, energy, and digital transformation are shaped through multilateral platforms. These include continental and global forums such as the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) system, G20, BRICS, COP processes, international financial institutions (IFIs), and regional economic communities (RECs).

Yet engagement with these platforms is often executive-driven, fragmented, and disconnected from domestic political processes. Electoral cycles provide a natural organising logic through which political parties can structure sustained, legitimate, and accountable engagement with multilateral governance spaces. Leveraging electoral cycles allows political parties to align domestic political incentives with international commitments, maintain continuity across political transitions, and ensure that Africa's multilateral engagement reflects citizen priorities.

Using Electoral Cycles to Strengthen African Political Party Engagement with Multilateral Platforms

Step 1: Map National Electoral Cycles Against Multilateral Policy Calendars

Political parties should begin by mapping national electoral timelines against key multilateral cycles, including:

- AU Summits and ministerial processes
- UN General Assembly and UN agency cycles
- COP processes and climate finance milestones
- G20 and BRICS presidencies and summits
- IFI policy, replenishment, and reform cycles
- REC summits (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD, etc.)

Why this matters:

Multilateral processes are predictable and cyclical. Understanding when political attention is highest, or constrained, helps parties decide when to invest in agenda-setting, coalition-building, or accountability.

Practical action:

Develop a political–multilateral engagement calendar that distinguishes:

1. Pre-election periods
2. Election years
3. Early mandate / post-election periods

Step 2: Clarify Political Party Roles Across Multilateral Arenas

Political party engagement with multilateral platforms should reflect political roles, not just state positions.

Governing Parties

- Shape official national and regional inputs into multilateral forums
- Champion implementation of commitments domestically
- Strengthen alignment between national, regional, and continental positions

Opposition Parties

- Provide oversight and alternative policy perspectives
- Sustain engagement during political transitions
- Prevent regression or elite capture of multilateral processes

Why this matters:

It safeguards multilateral engagement against political volatility and concentration of power.

Step 3: Differentiate Engagement Strategies by Electoral Phase

Electoral cycles shape what kind of engagement is feasible and effective.

Pre-Election Phase (12–24 months before elections)

Strategic focus: Agenda-setting and policy articulation

Political parties should:

- Integrate multilateral commitments (climate action, debt reform, trade, energy transition, social protection) into party platforms and manifestos
- Translate global policy debates into citizen-facing narratives
- Use consultations, policy dialogues, and alliances with CSOs and think tanks to develop informed positions

Democratic value:

This phase embeds multilateral engagement within domestic political legitimacy rather than elite diplomacy.

Election Phase

Strategic focus: Public positioning and accountability

During election periods, parties should:

- Communicate clear stances on Africa's role in multilateral forums
- Link international commitments to everyday concerns such as jobs, energy prices, service delivery, and inequality
- Make explicit commitments regarding post-election engagement in multilateral platforms

Democratic value:

Multilateral engagement becomes part of electoral choice, not a post-election afterthought.

Post-Election / Early Mandate Phase (0–18 months after elections)

Strategic focus: Institutionalisation and influence

For governing parties:

- Align national development plans with regional and global commitments
- Appoint or support technically competent party-linked actors into multilateral processes
- Coordinate national positions across ministries engaging multilaterally

For opposition parties:

- Establish monitoring and policy review mechanisms related to multilateral commitments
- Use parliamentary oversight to scrutinise international agreements and financing arrangements

Governance value:

This phase ensures continuity and coherence beyond campaign rhetoric.

Using Electoral Cycles to Strengthen African Political Party Engagement with Multilateral Platforms

Step 4: Use Electoral Cycles to Enable Regional and Continental Coordination

African multilateral engagement is collective by necessity, yet elections are staggered across countries.

Political parties and regional platforms should:

- Use non-election periods to convene cross-party, cross-country policy dialogues
- Build standing thematic caucuses (e.g. climate, energy, debt, digital governance) across RECs
- Feed consolidated positions into AU and regional coordination mechanisms

Key insight:

Staggered elections can be leveraged to ensure sustained leadership and institutional memory across the continent.

Step 5: Institutionalise Knowledge to Withstand Electoral Turnover

To avoid disruption caused by electoral change, political parties should:

- Establish permanent internal units focused on multilateral policy
- Maintain policy repositories, trackers, and learning platforms
- Invest in women and youth leaders as long-term multilateral policy actors

Outcome:

Engagement becomes structural rather than personality-driven.

Step 6: Close the Accountability Loop After Major Multilateral Milestones

Following summits, agreements, or global conferences, parties should:

- Communicate outcomes to party structures and the public
- Assess consistency between multilateral outcomes and electoral commitments
- Feed lessons learned into the next electoral cycle

Democratic dividend:

Citizens can trace how international engagement shapes national outcomes.

Practical Action 1.4: Leverage national climate commissions as “National Interface Bodies” with the G20

National climate commissions (e.g., South Africa’s Presidential Climate Commission, Kenya’s Climate Change Directorate, Rwanda’s Green Fund/FONERWA Council) can play a central role in shaping G20 input because they sit at the intersection of technical expertise, political decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. For example, South Africa’s Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) regularly synthesises just transition recommendations for Treasury and Presidency. These could easily be adapted into briefs for the G20 Energy Transitions Working Group or the Finance Track (e.g., on JET-P finance models). Many G20 WG delegations include think tanks, commissions, and technical agencies—not only government officials. In Indonesia, the National Council on Climate Change served on its G20 delegation during its presidency in 2022, feeding transition and adaptation metrics into the Energy and ECSWG tracks.

Guidelines for political leaders:

- Advocate for the production of evidence-based position papers for AU G20 structures: These commissions already undertake modelling, finance gap analysis, and policy scenario work. They can produce technical briefs aligned with G20 working groups (e.g., ECSWG, Energy, Finance Track). Political leaders can advocate for knowledge products that align analysis with upcoming G20 agenda items.
- Produce short, actionable recommendations targeted at the AU G20 Sherpa: Involve civil society and academia in drafting joint communiqués that can inform official engagement group recommendations, or working group briefs.
- Act as official technical delegates to G20 Working Groups: Commissions can join national delegations as technical advisors, and provide real-time inputs during WG drafting of communiqués. Through this, they can offer country case studies on adaptation, transition risks, or climate finance needs.
- Convene multi-stakeholder “knowledge hearings” to shape continental positions: Climate commissions excel at convening business, academia, labour, civil society, and local governments. Hearings can be hosted 2–3 months before G20 milestones and AU commissioners, G20 Sherpas, and Finance Ministry officials can be invited to participate. The PCC’s Just Transition hearings (2021–2023) influenced South Africa’s JET-IP negotiation stance, showing how national participatory processes can shape international finance positions.



Spotlight: Strengthening Political Parties for Inclusive Water and Energy Governance in Southern Africa

Improving access to water and energy is not only foundational to livelihoods, health, education, and industrialisation, but also central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 6, 7, and 9. At the heart of these challenges lies a political question: how effectively do political institutions translate citizen needs into responsive policy and action?

Political Parties as Catalysts for Change

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) works from the conviction that political parties are critical policy actors and key drivers of democratic accountability. Whether in government or opposition, political parties shape public policy, influence national budgets, provide oversight, and act as the primary link between citizens and the state. Yet across the region, many parties face constraints in policy capacity, internal democracy, inclusivity, and technical knowledge, particularly on complex, cross-cutting issues such as water and energy governance. DWF's work responds directly to this gap.

The Southern African Political Parties and Dialogue (SAPP&D) Programme

The Southern African Political Parties and Dialogue (SAPP&D) Programme was a four-year initiative implemented by DWF in partnership with Freedom House. The programme operated across Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Eswatini, Zambia, and Angola, with the aim of strengthening political parties' ability to develop participatory, citizen-responsive policies, particularly in the areas of water and energy. Central to the programme was sustained engagement with political parties across the political spectrum. In Zambia, DWF has formalised partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding with four major political parties: the Patriotic Front (PF), the United Party for National Development (UPND), the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), and the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD). Similar agreements are in place in Malawi and Lesotho, with additional arrangements under development in Botswana and Angola.

From Dialogue to Practice

Through needs assessments, high-level strategy workshops, and capacity-building interventions, DWF supports political parties to design policies and platforms that reflect citizen-identified priorities. Engagements consistently involve senior party leadership, including Secretaries-General, National Chairpersons, and members of National Executive Committees thereby embedding reform and learning at the highest decision-making levels.

In Lesotho, the programme has pioneered innovative platforms such as Technical Reference Groups (TRGs) on water and energy, bringing together political parties, civil society, academia, the private sector, and public institutions. Complementing this, Citizen Score Cards strengthen social accountability by creating structured spaces for dialogue between citizens and political actors on service delivery and policy performance.

Deepening Regional Impact

Recognising that water and energy challenges transcend national borders, DWF facilitates regional learning and cooperation. Through regional symposia and networks, political actors share experiences, lessons, and best practices on advancing inclusive, issue-based politics and strengthening democratic governance across Southern Africa. These platforms reinforce alignment with regional frameworks such as SADC's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan (REEESAP) and regional water infrastructure initiatives.

Why It Matters

By equipping political parties with the tools, knowledge, and platforms to engage citizens meaningfully and develop evidence-based policies, DWF is helping to strengthen democratic governance where it matters most—at the intersection of politics, public policy, and everyday life. In doing so, DWF is not only advancing better water and energy outcomes, but also contributing to more resilient, inclusive, and accountable democracies across Southern Africa.



The G20 is fundamentally an intergovernmental platform where national governments engage multilaterally on global issues such as climate change, debt sustainability, taxation, trade, and financial governance. Through various working groups, ministers and technical representatives negotiate policies and norms that ultimately influence the global rules of the game.

African states do not engage the G20 only as individual countries, they also participate in regional governance architectures such as SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD, and the African Union (AU). These bodies have their own treaties, norms, and policy positions which African states are obligated to consider at global platforms. This means regional bodies are not just coordination channel, but are powerful advocacy tools for shaping how the AU, and therefore Africa, positions itself at the G20. Political leaders can leverage these regional structures to influence Africa's collective stance at the G20 by shaping regional priorities, resolutions, and statements that feed into the AU's G20 Sherpa Track, Finance Track, and Ministerial inputs.

Practical Action 2.1: Use African Union Structures to Influence Sherpa and Finance Tracks

The African Union (AU) is the formal continental voice at the G20. Its Sherpa Track and Finance Track coordinate Africa's inputs into G20 leaders' declarations, ministerials, and working groups. Because AU structures harmonise the positions of 55 member states, political leaders can influence G20 outcomes by shaping AU decisions before they reach the negotiating table. For example, AU Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) set Africa-wide priorities on climate, finance, agriculture, and energy, many of which later guide AU Sherpa positions at G20 working groups. The AU Sherpa team also relies heavily on regional submissions from SADC, ECOWAS, and AMCEN.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Advocate for AU Commissioners to produce G20-aligned briefing papers: Political leaders can request the AU Commission (e.g., ARBE or Economic Development Department) to prepare short briefing notes on Africa's G20 priorities, such as adaptation finance, capital adequacy reform, or just energy transitions.
- Submit consolidated "Regional G20 Issue Papers" through the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC): These can include demands such as climate-debt swap mechanisms or increased concessional financing for African transitions.
- Request pre-G20 consultation meetings between AU Sherpas and regional political caucuses: These help integrate regional political priorities into official African positions at G20 Sherpa and Finance tracks.
- Mobilise the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) to adopt climate resolutions tied to G20 milestones: PAP resolutions act as political guidance for AU negotiators, elevating Africa's demands on climate finance and adaptation.

Practical Action 2.2: Leverage Pan-African Political Platforms to Generate Collective Positions

Pan-African political platforms, including the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), SADC Parliamentary Forum, ECOWAS Parliament, and continental party networks, provide political legitimacy and multi-party consensus that AU negotiators often rely on. These bodies can generate Africa-wide political narratives that directly influence G20 messaging.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Establish a Pan-African G20 Climate Caucus: Cross-party groups can issue unified statements ahead of G20 summits or ministerial meetings, strengthening Africa's negotiating credibility. For example, PAP's climate governance resolutions in 2022–2023 were used by the AU Commission to align proposals for Africa's Common Position on Climate Finance and parliamentarians have expressed their commitment to climate action.
- Champion climate-related motions in PAP or REC Parliaments: These motions can urge AU bodies to push specific issues at the G20, such as SDR reallocation or just transition financing models.
- Work with political foundations and think tanks to co-produce high-impact "G20 Africa Messages": Foundations like DWF, or the Mo Ibrahim Foundation can help political leaders craft evidence-backed recommendations aligned with G20 working groups.
- Organise regional hearing sessions to integrate civil society and expert voices: Similar to PAP committee hearings, these sessions can produce regional communiqués to feed into AU Sherpa consultations.



Practical Action 2.3: Use Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to Shape Continental Climate and Finance Agendas

RECs such as SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, and IGAD are powerful norm-setting bodies. Their ministerial communiqués, climate strategies, and policy frameworks often become foundational inputs for AU positions at the G20. For example, SADC Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan (2015–2020) established regional priorities on adaptation finance, disaster risk reduction, and water-energy-food nexus governance. The AU Commission’s Department of Rural Economy & Agriculture referenced the SADC strategy while drafting the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032), which now informs AU positions in global forums, including G20 engagement.⁶ Similarly, the ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy (2020) outlines strong positions on adaptation, climate finance accessibility, and capacity-building.

The AU Working Group on Climate Change referenced ECOWAS’s modelling on costed adaptation gaps, which influenced the AU’s positions on “scaled-up adaptation finance” that are now reflected in AU submissions to global dialogues involving G20 members.⁷ For East Africa, the EAC Climate Change Policy (2011) & Strategy (2011–2031) establishes common positions on resilience, climate-smart agriculture, and transboundary ecosystems, and again the AU Climate Change Strategy (2022–2032) explicitly cites the EAC framework in its section on regional alignment, showing direct influence.⁸ In addition, the EAC Ministers’ Communiqué on Climate-Resilient Infrastructure (2018) in which ministers called for climate-proofing regional transport corridors and emphasised the need for international concessional finance. These priorities influenced AU STC (Specialised Technical Committee) outcomes on infrastructure, which are used when AU negotiators engage platforms like the G20 Infrastructure Working Group.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Introduce G20-linked climate priorities into REC Ministerial communiqués: Language on adaptation finance, cross-border energy corridors, and regional resilience can be adopted by AU Specialised Technical Committees (STCs).
- Propose REC-level policy positions on debt, climate finance, and green industrialisation: These can then be transmitted to the AU as regional consensus inputs.
- Convene joint REC political–technical dialogues: Invite AU Sherpa teams, REC secretariats, and regional climate centres (e.g., SADC Climate Services Centre) to define shared priorities for AU-G20 engagement.
- Use REC Parliamentary Forums to issue streamlined climate resolutions: These forums can adopt positions on regional transition needs, such as energy pooling or climate security risks, which the AU must consider.

Learn more about DWF’s work with Regional Economic Communities, by following this links

- MOVING BEYOND THE RHETORIC REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM: <https://www.democracyworks.org.za/watch-moving-beyond-the-rhetoric-regional-symposium/>
- AU CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE: <https://www.democracyworks.org.za/category/workareas/spaces/africacharter/>

Practical Action 2.4: Leverage National Climate Commissions as “National Interface Bodies” with the G20

National climate commissions (e.g., South Africa’s Presidential Climate Commission, Kenya’s Climate Change Directorate, Rwanda’s FONERWA Council) sit at the intersection of technical knowledge, political decision-making, and stakeholder engagement.

Many G20 delegations (such as Indonesia in 2022) include commissions or advisory councils as part of official working groups. South Africa’s PCC, for example, develops just transition policy recommendations used by Treasury and the Presidency, which could easily inform G20 Finance Track and Energy Transitions discussions.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Advocate for evidence-based “G20-ready” technical briefs: Climate commissions can prepare modelling-based position papers on adaptation finance gaps, transition risks, or capital adequacy reforms that align with G20 working group agendas.
- Prepare short, targeted recommendations for AU G20 Sherpa teams: These can be co-developed with civil society and academia, providing actionable insights for engagement groups and working groups.
- Nominate commissions as official technical delegates to G20 working groups: Their expertise can help shape technical sections of G20 communiqués and provide case studies on African transitions.
- Host pre-G20 public “knowledge hearings” to consolidate inputs: Invite AU Commissioners, Sherpa teams, and finance officials to hearings similar to PCC’s Just Transition dialogues¹⁰, ensuring national perspectives influence continental positions.



Practical Action 2.5: Use African Development Bank (AfDB) Platforms to Shape Africa’s Financing Narrative

The AfDB is central to climate finance mobilisation and a major contributor to global debates on MDB reform - one of the most important G20 issues. It frequently collaborates with the G20 on the Independent Expert Group on MDB Reform, just transition financing frameworks, and SDR rechanneling proposals.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Request G20-focused climate finance briefings from AfDB economists: These can translate AfDB modelling into political talking points for AU G20 submissions.
- Co-produce regional climate finance reform proposals with AfDB: These can outline Africa’s needs for concessional finance, debt restructuring, and transition investment —then be delivered to AU Sherpa teams.
- Organise G20–Africa sessions during AfDB Annual Meetings: Political leaders can convene high-level panels with AfDB leadership to highlight Africa’s climate investment gaps.
- Engage with AfDB’s Africa NDC Hub or Adaptation Initiatives: These specialised platforms develop data and analytics that strengthen Africa’s G20 messaging.



Practical Action 2.6: Strengthen Linkages with the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) to Align Climate Diplomacy with G20 Agendas

The AGN drives Africa's technical climate diplomacy under the UNFCCC. Although COP negotiations differ from the G20, issues such as finance, adaptation, transition planning, often overlap. Many G20 climate agenda items (e.g., climate finance reform, MDB restructuring, transition financing, just transition frameworks) are shaped by outcomes or debates happening at the UNFCCC, where AGN leads Africa's technical input. The AU Sherpa system often struggles with technical depth, especially on finance or modelling and the AGN fills that gap. For example, AGN's Influence on Adaptation Finance (COP26–COP28)

At COP26 and COP27, AGN advocated for doubling adaptation finance, and this demand became a central AU position, later echoed by African Finance Ministers and used in global dialogues with G20 countries. The AGN positions have previously influenced African Union common positions, especially when the AU negotiates with major donors who are also G20 members (EU, China, U.S., Canada, UK). AGN's modelling and scenario analysis can help the AU and political leaders craft more informed G20 positions.

When G20 finance discussions in 2022–2023 touched on climate finance reforms, African delegates referred to the same adaptation finance gap analyses produced by AGN's technical teams.

The AGN's Technical Leadership on Loss and Damage (COP27) is another example. The AGN was pivotal in pushing the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund. After COP27, AU Sherpas and African Finance Ministers incorporated this achievement into Africa's narrative on international financial architecture reform which is directly relevant to G20 finance track negotiations.

Key Functions of the AGN

1 Formulating Common Positions

The group prepares and drafts unified African negotiating texts and common positions on various climate change issues, which are guided by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and the Committee of Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).

2 Advocacy and Representation

The AGN is the sole representative of the African continent at the technical negotiator level in the UNFCCC process. It advocates for the continent's interests and priorities on the global stage.

3 **Negotiating Priorities**

They negotiate for specific outcomes reflecting Africa's unique vulnerabilities and development needs

4 **Technical and Strategic Support**

The AGN provides technical support and strategic advice to African political bodies and national delegations, ensuring their positions are evidence-based and coordinated.

5 **Coordination with Other Blocs**

The group works in collaboration with the G77 and China negotiating bloc, as a unified developing country voice is considered critical to advancing common interests in the negotiations.

6 **Implementation Support**

The group supports the implementation of climate action within Africa, including developing continent-wide initiatives like the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI).



Guidelines for political leaders

- Host AGN–Political Leader Roundtables on G20 finance and climate issues: AGN can brief political leaders on where UNFCCC decisions intersect with G20 discussions (e.g., Loss and Damage or adaptation finance). These are where UNFCCC decisions intersect with G20 items (e.g., adaptation, global stocktake findings, finance reforms) and can define what Africa's "red lines" are at the COP that should not be undermined at the G20. Ahead of COP27, AGN briefed the Pan-African Parliament and the South African PCC-demonstrating the feasibility of these political-technical engagements.
- Co-develop monthly "Africa Climate Diplomacy Bulletins": These can synthesise technical updates to shape AU G20 briefs. Where UNFCCC decisions intersect with G20 items (e.g., adaptation, global stock-take findings, finance reforms). Ahead of COP27, AGN briefed the Pan-African Parliament and the South African PCC-demonstrating the feasibility of these political-technical engagements.
- Use AGN modelling tools to inform continental G20 language: AGN data on adaptation gaps, risk exposure, or transition costs can strengthen Africa's bargaining power. The AGN's data (often generated with the support of ACPC/ECA and the African Development Bank) estimates Africa's adaptation financing needs at USD 52–86 billion per year by 2030. These numbers have been used repeatedly in AU statements to the G20 and in engagements with the G7 on just transition financing.¹³
- Engage AGN experts in AU STC dialogues: Their technical evidence helps ensure Africa's positions at G20 are aligned with broader climate negotiations.

Agenda 2063, Climate Change, and the Role of Multilateral Platforms

Positioning Africa's Long-Term Vision in Global Climate Governance

Agenda 2063 is the African Union's long-term strategic framework for inclusive growth, sustainable development, and structural transformation over a 50-year horizon. At its core is a vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." Climate change is not treated as a standalone issue within Agenda 2063, but as a cross-cutting risk and opportunity that directly affects Africa's ability to realise this vision. As Africa confronts rising temperatures, water stress, energy insecurity, food system vulnerability, and climate-induced displacement, effective engagement with multilateral platforms has become essential to delivering on Agenda 2063's aspirations.

Climate Change Within Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 recognises climate change as a systemic threat to Africa's development pathways, while also identifying climate action as a catalyst for transformation. Climate considerations are embedded across multiple Aspirations and Flagship Programmes, including:

- **Aspiration 1:** A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, emphasises climate-resilient economies, sustainable natural resource management, and green industrialisation.
- **Aspiration 6:** An Africa whose development is people-driven, highlights the need for inclusive climate responses that protect vulnerable communities, women, and youth.
- **Flagship priorities** such as renewable energy expansion, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction.

Agenda 2063 is the African Union's long-term framework for inclusive growth, sustainable development, and structural transformation, and climate change is a cross-cutting issue that directly shapes the continent's ability to realise this vision. Climate impacts such as water stress, energy insecurity, food system vulnerability, and climate-induced displacement threaten economic development and social cohesion, while climate action also presents opportunities for green industrialisation, renewable energy expansion, and climate-resilient growth. Achieving Agenda 2063's climate-related aspirations cannot be realised through national action alone and requires active, strategic engagement in multilateral platforms such as the African Union, the UN system and COP processes, the G20, international financial institutions, and regional economic communities. These platforms are critical for mobilising climate finance, shaping global rules and norms, facilitating technology transfer, and strengthening regional coordination in ways that reflect Africa's development priorities and equity concerns.

Why Multilateral Platforms Matter

Achieving Agenda 2063's climate-related goals cannot be realised through national action alone. Climate change is inherently transboundary, and the scale of finance, technology, and policy coordination required places multilateral platforms at the centre of Africa's climate strategy.

Multilateral platforms play a critical role in three key areas:

Mobilising Climate Finance and Resources

Platforms such as the UNFCCC, COP processes, G20, international financial institutions, and development banks shape access to climate finance, concessional lending, debt relief, and adaptation funding. These mechanisms are essential to closing Africa's climate finance gap and enabling investment in resilient infrastructure and clean energy.

Shaping Global Rules and Norms

Multilateral forums determine the rules governing emissions reduction, carbon markets, climate adaptation, loss and damage, and energy transitions. Active African engagement is necessary to ensure these rules reflect the continent's development realities and do not constrain industrialisation or poverty reduction.

Enabling Regional and Continental Coordination

Platforms such as the African Union, regional economic communities (RECs), and South-South cooperation forums support alignment between national climate priorities and continental frameworks, reinforcing coherence with Agenda 2063.

Aligning Agenda 2063 with multilateral climate action enables Africa to translate its long-term development priorities into concrete global commitments, financing mechanisms, and partnerships that support climate-resilient and inclusive growth. Through sustained engagement in multilateral platforms, African actors can advocate for just and equitable climate transitions that recognise historical responsibility and the continent's development needs, while also building strategic partnerships for technology transfer, skills development, and innovation. Coordinated participation in these forums strengthens Africa's collective bargaining power and amplifies its influence in shaping global climate rules and norms, a shift reflected in the African Union's expanding role in multilateral governance, including its permanent membership in the G20. Realising Agenda 2063's climate ambitions, however, depends not only on access to multilateral spaces but also on strong political leadership, capable institutions, and sustained engagement across electoral cycles. Political and institutional actors play a critical role in anchoring multilateral climate commitments in domestic policy and legislation, ensuring accountability for implementation, and linking citizen priorities with continental and global climate agendas, thereby translating multilateral engagement into tangible national and local outcomes.

Practical Action 2.7: Leverage Regional Climate Commissions to Shape Africa's Thematic Priorities at the G20

Climate commissions such as African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the Congo Basin Climate Commission, the Sahel Climate Commission, and the Island States Climate Commission produce declarations and strategies that directly influence AU climate positions. For example, the 2023 Nairobi Declaration from AMCEN significantly shaped Africa's messaging on global finance reform.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Push for inclusion of G20 priorities in AMCEN ministerial decisions: These can cover climate-risk insurance, adaptation finance, and cross-border resilience infrastructure.
- Use regional climate summits to launch flagship African initiatives for G20 advocacy: Initiatives such as regional carbon market mechanisms or multi-country adaptation programmes can be pitched to AU Sherpas.
- Invite AU Sherpas and Commissioners to regional climate summits: Present declarations with clear expectations for G20 representation.
- Commission regional climate centres to prepare analytical briefs: These briefs can strengthen Africa's technical submissions to the G20.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) provides continent-wide leadership for environmental governance, developing common African positions on global issues, promoting sustainable development, and strengthening regional cooperation on climate change, biodiversity, pollution, and resource management, ensuring Africa's voice is heard in international negotiations and driving national policy for environmental protection.

Practical Action 2.8: Shape G20 Engagement Groups (C20, T20, B20, Y20, W20, L20) Through African Networks

G20 engagement groups help shape working group recommendations. They produce policy recommendations, communiqués, and technical briefs that G20 Sherpas and Working Groups regularly consult when drafting leaders' communiqués and ministerial messages. When African voices are present and coordinated across these channels, their language often finds its way into G20 outputs (and thence into MDB and donor dialogues). African youth, women, business, labour, and civil society groups increasingly participate but often lack consolidated continental political support. Political leaders can help amplify Africa's messages across these channels.

Guidelines for political leaders

- Support African experts to submit position papers to T20 and C20: These papers often influence G20 working group outputs on climate, finance, and sustainability. Political leaders can identify 2–3 credible African think tanks/centres (e.g., ACPC, IDDR partners in Africa, SAIIA, DWf, GGA, Plataforma CIPÓ) and commission a short (4–8 page) policy brief tied to a specific G20 Working Group (e.g., Infrastructure, International Financial Architecture, Climate Action). Ask authors to include one paragraph of suggested G20 wording. Formal sponsorship of the brief (party letter + AfDB/REC endorsement) can create political buy-in and could be followed by a request for the T20/C20 taskforce chairs to table it at the T20/C20 midterm and summit. T20 policy briefs are explicitly prepared to inform Sherpas and working groups; T20 South Africa's policy brief series, for example, includes targeted recommendations on financing climate-resilient infrastructure for Africa.
- Mobilise African business councils to push for green industrialisation messages in B20: Regional business alliances can advocate for climate-aligned industrial development corridors. A first step would be to convene regional business chambers (e.g., AfCFTA business hubs, national chambers) to draft a short "Business for Africa's Green Industrial Corridors" note. The B20 co-chairs can be approached to include it in the B20 taskforce on Industrial Transformation / Infrastructure. AfDB or Afreximbank can also be approached to co-endorse the proposal and request the B20 Secretariat to transmit it to G20 Infrastructure/Industrial WG chairs.
- Encourage youth and women political wings to engage Y20 and W20: This ensures Africa's just transition and climate justice narratives appear in official engagement group recommendations. Party youth/women's wings can be supported to draft 1–2 page position notes on climate justice/just transitions and request them be included in national Y20/W20 delegations. Another action could be to fund or sponsor African delegates to attend the Y20/W20 pre-summits and ensure they carry the party-endorsed position.

LOOKING AHEAD

Africa's permanent seat at the G20 marks a strategic shift in global governance that opens unprecedented opportunities for the continent to shape the climate and energy agenda. But influence is neither automatic nor guaranteed. It requires deliberate political leadership, coherent regional coordination, and the ability to translate Africa's diverse priorities into a unified continental voice that resonates within the G20's complex architecture.

This toolkit has outlined a set of practical, actionable pathways for African political leaders to engage strategically with the G20, from leveraging Regional Economic Communities as norm-setting hubs, to drawing on the African Group of Negotiators' technical expertise, to mobilising the powerful ecosystems of G20 engagement groups across youth, women, civil society, business, and labour. Each of these pathways illustrates that meaningful influence emerges when political leaders convene, align, and amplify the work already underway across the continent. Ultimately, Africa's ability to shape global climate and energy outcomes will depend on how effectively its leaders can connect domestic ambitions with regional platforms and continental processes, and then project these priorities into global decision-making spaces. The G20 is one such space because it is high-impact, agenda-setting, and increasingly open to African leadership.

African political actors like ministers, parliamentarians, party leaders, youth and women wings, and subregional blocs, have the tools, platforms, and political legitimacy to steer global conversations on climate finance, just transitions, resilience, and energy access. By taking forward the steps outlined in this toolkit, leaders can help ensure that Africa does not merely participate in the G20, but actively shapes the rules, norms, and commitments that will define global climate action for decades to come.

Africa stands at a crossroads of vulnerability and potential. With coordinated, confident, and informed engagement, the continent can advance a vision of climate and energy governance that is just, equitable, ambitious, and deeply African. This toolkit is a contribution to that collective effort which can support leaders to turn opportunity into influence, and influence into transformative outcomes for the continent.

ABOUT DEMOCRACY WORKS FOUNDATION

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) is a southern African non-profit company focused on democracy development in the region. With headquarters in South Africa, DWF works through its country offices to provide tools to develop resilient democracies.

As an independent foundation, we build and promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable consensus democracies. We do so by providing tools, platforms and content to strengthen democrats, democratic culture and democracy institutions. DWF opened its doors in 2014 in response to the weakening of public institutions, corruption and declining public participation in South Africa as well as concerns about democratic and development progress in post-liberation Southern Africa.

Our Climate and Environmental Governance Programme (CEGP) seeks to democratise climate action by embedding climate and environmental decisions in transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance systems at local, national, and international levels. With climate and environmental issues increasingly prioritised in policy and investment decision-making, the CEGP aims to leverage this increased focus as an opportunity to strengthen governance and promote democratic policies, processes and institutions. In this, we work to re-politicise climate and natural resource management debates, recognising that climate change is not just an environmental issue, but a deeply political process.



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