



POLICY BRIEF

ENERGY JUST TRANSITION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY

FACILITATOR:
Wanjikú Wairia

CO-FACILITATOR:
Dr. Janet Munakamwe
Srinivas Krishnaswamy

Solidarity

Equality

Sustainability

ORGANIZATIONS

Jeceme Investments Ltd
 The Advocacy Team
 Project 90 by 2030
 BFM & Associates / SARChi Creation of Decent Work and Sustainable Livelihood
 The Global Shapers: Tshwane Hub
 Global Shapers Community Tshwane Hub
 EmpowerAfrica Youth Network (EAYN+)
 Owe2Green
 The ARK of Mankind
 The Grail Centre Trust
 Lady of Peace Community Foundation
 China Meteorological Service Association (CMSA)
 Vukani Climate and Environmental Justice
 SEEDI NPC
 Dibashe Special Educare-Inclusive and Multi-purpose
 Help Her Heal
 Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
 The Elders
 Social Change Assistance Trust
 Middelburg Environmental Justice Network (MEJN)
 Khuthala environmental movement
 Skill academy
 Amadiya project organization
 Vaal United Business Forum
 IMA Media Africa
 African Youth Union Commission the Gambia
 Southern Africa Resource Watch
 Mbula Kalala
 Grassroots for Climate Action
 Outcast activism forum Uganda
 SUGARE GBVF EDU DEV & VEP SUPPORT NPO
 Show Me Your Number
 Vasudha Foundation
 Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA)
 Stanley-candice foundation
 Airman
 Alternative Futures
 Climate Transparency International
 Climate Action Network South Africa (SACAN)
 Mthombo development services
 Buhera Residents Network Trust
 ORA Energy Intelligence
 Meadowlands Community Forum
 Dzomolamupo
 South African Youth Association of Global Affairs
 Refentse of South Africa
 United Front
 Ubuntu Rural Women and Youth Movement
 SCMAC
 Emerging Scholars Initiative
 Fateng unemployment movement
 Tshikululu Social Investment
 Muhle Joyce Mashiteng
 Zimbabwe Artisanal Miners Association
 Oxfam South Africa

Just Energy Transition Task Force
 The Department Trade, Industry and Competition
 Girl's Gloves Up Foundation
 China Energy Conservation Association
 Omama Bemvelo
 Bahumi Foundation
 Eco Girls SA
 Oxfam SA
 Baetsi Solutions Pty LTD
 Bathopele NGO
 Southern Health Foundation
 Faculty of Best Advisory
 Human Rights Education Centre
 Greenpeace Africa
 Energy Conversations
 Earth Partners SA
 South African Climate Action Network
 Eastern Cape Environmental Network
 Earthlife Africa Jhb
 Climate defenders Zimbabwe
 Tshwaraganang Ma-Africa
 Pan African Disability Network
 Afrikan Liberation Hub
 Mangosuthu University of Technology
 Sukumani Environmental Justice
 Amaqhawe Project Centre
 FATHER OF NATIONS
 Fateng Unemployed Movement
 BeeAfrican
 Grassroot for Climate Action
 Ecco
 Rise boitekong
 Nomthandazo community center
 MS Environmental Projects
 Tshwane University of Technology
 Climate Relief Consortium
 Youth of India Foundation
 TEMVELO Foundation
 youth environmental solidarity
 Dynamic Recycling
 Tato foundation
 Energy and Distribution
 Quotient Global mining services
 Tau Sejala Enterprise
 Letsunyane NPC Projects
 Boipelo Omphile Tshimologo Banna@Work
 Doctors Without Borders
 NALEDI
 African Women in Agriculture
 NIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
 OXFAM [Kenya]
 Oxfam Kenya
 Ubuntu Foundation
 Barwaqa Relief Organization
 Wesselton Youth Development Program

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite ambitious declarations, current climate trajectories suggest a world headed for 2.6°C of warming, far above the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C threshold. Inaction and fragmented efforts risk deepening global inequalities and unleashing irreversible damage to our ecosystems and economies.

The impacts disproportionately affect women, youth, indigenous peoples, rural communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ groups. South Africa's G20 Presidency presents a historic opportunity to champion justice, social safeguards, and a people-centric climate, as well as a Energy Just Transition rooted in solidarity, equality, and sustainability.

The sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC-AR6 2023] reiterates that anthropogenic greenhouse gas [GHG] emissions have exacerbated global warming, pushing global mean temperature above pre-industrial levels by 1.1°C. GHG emissions continue to increase due to unsustainable energy and land use practices, as well as unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Further, the report warns that without urgent action, the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement is likely to be breached.

This brief, reflecting civil society priorities, outlines the key considerations for the Energy Just Transition, Environment, and Climate Sustainability during the South African G20 Presidency. It advances the current theme of "solidarity, equality, and sustainability" and acknowledges the African Union Agenda 2063 as the continent's blueprint and vehicle for sustainable development, climate resilience, and green industrialization.

Moreover, it builds on declarations of the previous three G20 Presidencies [Indonesia, India, Brazil] and urges the G20 to champion equitable and inclusive climate action, as the group represents ~85% of the global GDP and two-thirds of the population and is well-placed to lead on development-focused energy transition.

This policy brief, grounded in intersectional analysis including desktop research, case studies, focus group discussions [FGDs], expert interviews, and consultative webinars, offers key recommendations to advance an inclusive and justice-people centric environment and climate sustainability.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



RECOMMENDATIONS:

These recommendations cover the broad aspects of Governance Reforms, Legal and Policy Instruments, Investment Priorities, and Civil Society Programmatic actions. These aspects have been further elucidated in the Recommendations of this policy brief.

1. Energy Security and Sovereignty:

Establish binding G20 governance frameworks for critical minerals to eradicate energy poverty and accelerate universal access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy—channeling revenues into tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency by 2030.

2. Inclusive and Rights-Based Transition:

Ensure inclusivity in the transition by upholding Free, Prior, and Informed Consent [FPIC], technology, knowledge sharing, and capacity building for climate and energy planning, integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems [IKS], and embedding gender-responsive frameworks, while supporting direct and indirect workers, value chains, informal economies, women, and vulnerable groups.

3. Sustainable Financing:

Advance reparative, equitable, and non-debt-creating finance, promote access to transition capital. Further, support the joint development of low-carbon technologies and frameworks to enable MSME diversification and decarbonization, underpinned by strong accountability, transparency, and community participation.

4. Environment and Biodiversity Conservation:

Adopt international treaties to scale up community-led conservation and ecosystem restoration, eradicate toxic substances such as plastics, pesticides, and mercury through a global moratorium, and advance organic alternatives alongside sustainable waste management strategies. Enforce policies against capitalist extractivism, including ocean mining, to safeguard biodiversity, oceans, and the quality of water and air.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



1 INTRODUCTION

Climate change has devastated communities globally, with developing nations bearing the heaviest burden. Between 1993 and 2022, 9,400 extreme weather events caused over 765,000 deaths and USD 4.2 trillion in economic losses according to the Climate Risk Index. Recent disasters illustrate this crisis: floods in Central Texas killed 135 people, and 102 died in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province during June-July 2025.

South Africa has faced cyclones, floods, and mudslides that expose infrastructure vulnerabilities and disproportionately impact poor, rural, and Black communities, particularly women who face intensified food insecurity, displacement, and health risks. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report warns that water stress, heat stress, and desertification will persist even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C. For developing countries, climate impacts compound existing challenges, including energy poverty and unemployment.

Current environmental disruptions, shifting rainfall, rising temperatures, and extreme weather, are reshaping ecosystems and livelihoods globally. Unlike historical climate shifts that occurred over millennia, today's unprecedented changes unfold within decades, driven by fossil fuel combustion, deforestation, mining, and industrial agriculture. Climate policies must address the full spectrum of barriers and potential vulnerabilities that people with disabilities, women, and historically excluded marginalised communities face, and risk reinforcing or creating new barriers. There is an urgent need for research that includes first-hand experiences of people with disabilities, allowing policymakers to create inclusive solutions that go beyond technical or economic responses. For this, their participation is needed so that policies have direct relevance for the actual experience of these communities.

Fossil fuels dominate the energy landscape, accounting for ~80% of global primary energy and contributing ~75% of GHG emissions and ~90% of CO2 emissions, despite renewables meeting 30% of electricity needs. As of 2024, 737 million people globally [650+ million in Africa] lack electricity access, while 2 billion lack clean cooking facilities.

The solution requires an Energy Just Transition [EJT]—an equity-focused shift to renewable systems embedding social justice, participatory governance, and equitable benefit distribution. However, implementation faces barriers including inadequate planning, financing gaps, over-indebtedness, and social inequalities, particularly in the Global South. A poorly managed transition could be as devastating as climate change itself, making the G20's leadership crucial for ensuring a just, people-centric energy transformation that protects vulnerable communities and workers while achieving universal clean energy access.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Climate disasters deepen inequalities because of the disproportionate way in which they affect marginalised communities such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, rural communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ groups. In climate-induced disasters, the crisis of social reproduction, the daily and generational labour of sustaining life, becomes a focal point. Women bear the brunt of unpaid care work, which intensifies during climate emergencies. Climate finance contributions and advocacy must therefore be geared towards meeting the needs and interests of the most marginalized communities.

Much as science has advanced our understanding of current climate realities and origin, the fact remains that the impact of climate change on our lives will be unbearable, irreversible, and environmentally unsustainable if temperatures rise to a global average of 2 degrees Celsius.

2. ISSUE ANALYSIS:

Despite 30 years of global climate treaties, G20 member states consistently fail to meet targets, with only a handful having legally binding net-zero commitments. Progress is hampered by conflicting interests prioritizing profit over environmental protection and marginalized communities, plus inadequate stakeholder consultations between decision-makers and affected populations.

Climate disasters exacerbate historical inequalities rooted in colonialism, capitalism, racism, and sexism, disproportionately impacting poor communities lacking adaptive resources. The climate crisis interconnects with poverty, unemployment, and inequality, requiring integrated solutions addressing social, gender, and economic justice rather than isolated environmental approaches. It is of utmost importance that the budget and resource mobilisation for climate disasters in each country make provision for historically excluded groups such as people with disabilities, single women households, the elderly, rural women, people in informal settlements, households run by orphaned children, and LGBTIQ+ communities. Climate change deepens inequalities and disproportionately impacts various social groups, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, rural communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ groups. This calls for Intersectional climate justice and the institutionalization of feminist-responsive climate governance, given that women shoulder the heavy burden of household social reproduction.

Some of the regional and international instruments and commitments to consider include the UNFCCC [1992], Paris Agreement [2015], Sendai Framework [2015–2030], CBD & Kunming-Montreal [2022], ILO Guidelines on Just Transition [2015], CEDAW GR37 [2018], AU Climate Change Strategy [2022–2032],

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Africa Renewable Energy Initiative [AREI], SADC Climate Change Strategy [2015], SADC Protocol on Energy [1996] with a special emphasis on the NCDs.

In climate-induced disasters, the crisis of social reproduction, the daily and generational labour of sustaining life, becomes a focal point. Women bear the brunt of unpaid care work, which intensifies during climate emergencies. Much as science has advanced our understanding of current climate realities and origin, the fact remains that the impact of climate change on our lives will be unbearable, irreversible, and environmentally unsustainable if temperatures rise to a global average of 2 degrees Celsius.

While SDGs 13, 14, and 15 provide frameworks for climate justice, they face threats from capitalist extractivism that degrades ecosystems and undermines indigenous knowledge. In South Africa's Marikana mining community, residents report severe environmental and health impacts, including chromium-polluted water, toxic air quality, miscarriages, skin rashes, and respiratory problems linked to mining activities.

Indigenous communities face appropriation of their knowledge and intellectual property by researchers while being excluded from decision-making. They demand respect for Indigenous Knowledge Systems [IKS] and Intellectual Property Rights [IPR], protection of environmental defenders, socio-ecological audits for extractive projects, and the right to say 'NO' or 'YES' to new mining operations targeting critical transition minerals.

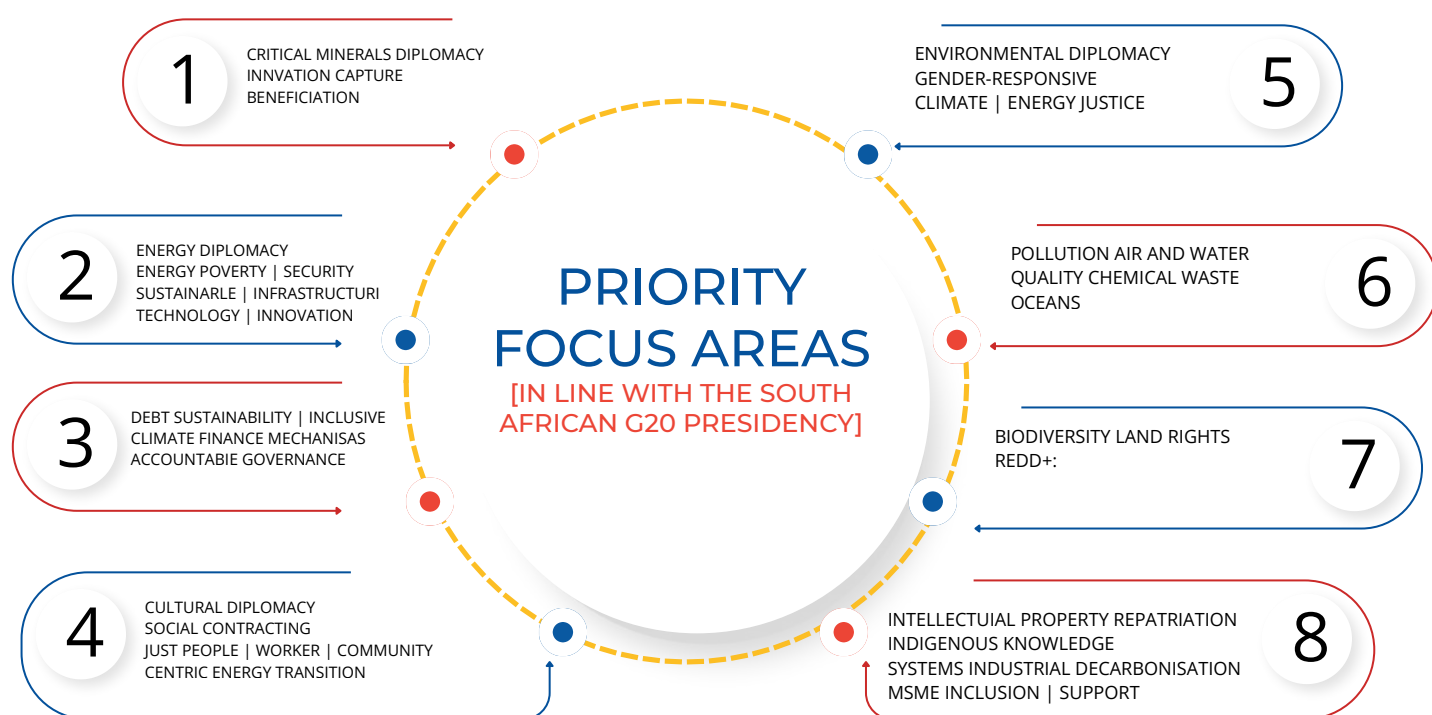
G20 states must recalibrate commitments toward climate science and equity imperatives for a fairer, greener global economy.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



THE KEY PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE C20 WG 14

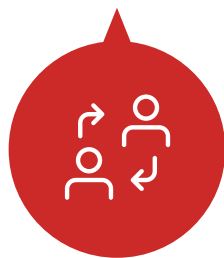
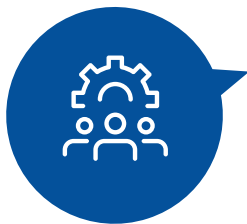
Figure 1: The diagram below presents a summary of the key priority areas for the Energy Just Transition, Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group



presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



High Performance Workplace Culture



Empowering
autonomy fuels
innovation and
growth



Clear
communication
drives cohesive
teamwork



Recognition
programs boost
employee
engagement



Continuous
learning elevates
skill
development



Values-driven
leadership
shapes positive
environment

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Solidarity

Equality

Sustainability

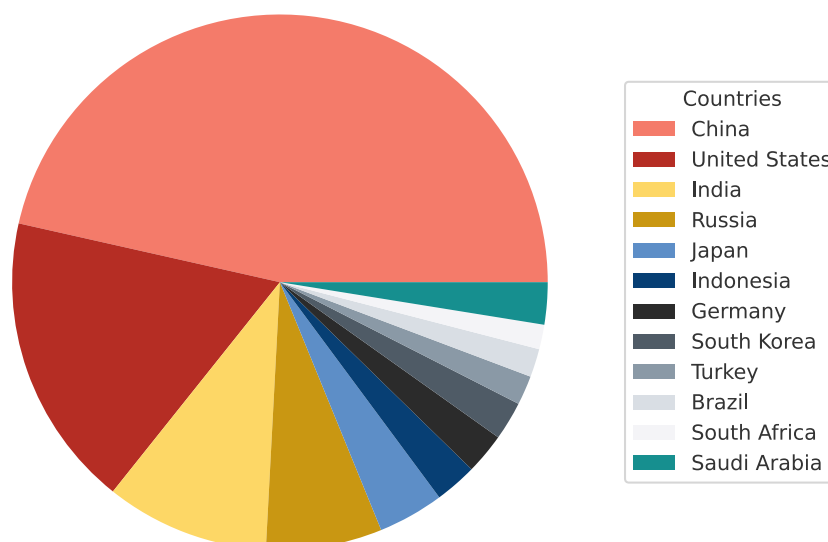


3. SUMMARY OF THE PRIORITY AREAS - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY:

South Africa's G20 environmental priorities highlight imperative action to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems amid escalating climate threats. Key concerns include land degradation, desertification, and drought driven by unsustainable mining and agriculture, which jeopardize food security and disenfranchise rural women. Oceans face mounting pressure from pollution, plastic waste, and industrial exploitation, while freshwater resources are strained by climate change, population growth, and mining demands. Air pollution and weak climate governance threaten global health, and toxic chemicals from mining and agriculture contaminate ecosystems. South Africa also, unequivocally, advocates for climate finance reform that moves beyond concessional loans and debt to reparations and grants; genuine just transitions to fight existential energy poverty, and the protection of indigenous knowledge systems. This calls for inclusive governance and sustainable development rooted in equity and ecological integrity. As a flagship G20 Legacy Project, the Rhino Renaissance Campaign epitomizes South Africa's commitment to reversing biodiversity loss by restoring rhino populations, empowering local communities, and reasserting global leadership in conservation through coordinated national action and innovative wildlife protection strategies.

Despite annual global treaties and cooperation for the past three decades to reduce carbon emissions, member states fall short of meeting their yearly targets and global goals, as illustrated and summarized in the World Economic Report, 2025, as follows:

TOP COUNTRIES BY PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL CO2 EMISSIONS



presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Globally, 14 out of 15 of the largest emitters are G20 countries, and only a handful of G20 countries have legally binding net-zero targets with detailed transition plans. Climate Transparency [1] reports that while numerous countries have stepped up their efforts to cut emissions in their Nationally Determined Contributions [NDCs], the collective level of ambition remains insufficient to meet the 1.5°C global warming threshold. The seminal Global Stocktake on NDCs was adopted at COP28, and in 2025, Countries party to the Paris Agreement are expected to present their updated reflective reports at COP30. At the time of writing, only three countries, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, had updated their NDCs.[2] South Africa's cabinet has adopted the NDCs, although they are still subject to public consultations.

In their 2025 NDCs, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa each underscore the urgency of climate action while grappling with distinct national challenges. Argentina's NDC 3.0 accentuates a just transition, integrating human rights, equity, and biodiversity goals, while calling for stronger oversight and decentralised energy systems. Brazil's updated NDC presents a bold vision for 2035 rooted in "Climate Justice," anchored by its Pact for Ecological Transformation and a commitment to end deforestation by 2030, with absolute emissions caps and a shift toward a regenerative bioeconomy. Mexico's strategy positions climate action as a pathway to prosperity, focusing on inclusive development, rural electrification, and clean transport, with sectoral dialogues shaping its socially inclusive NDC 3.0. South Africa's NDC integrates adaptation, mitigation, and loss-and-damage frameworks, which set clear targets for 2026–2035 and reinforce its commitment to a net-zero transition by 2050, all while navigating climate vulnerabilities and equity concerns.

Generally, there is still a lack of maximum consensus on 'who, where, and how' of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. This is due to clashing interests that put profit for the few at the expense of the protection of natural resources, marginalised, and the working-class poor. Furthermore, there are inadequate national and global consultations among stakeholders - the decision-makers, duty-holders, and the affected communities. This paralyses sustainable solutions to address climate change and environmental sustainability.

The goal is to reduce risks from the harmful effects of climate change, such as sea-level rise, more intense extreme weather events, food insecurity, land degradation, ill-health, water, and air pollution. G20 Member States must recalibrate their commitments and investments in line with the climate science and equity imperatives to reduce emissions and in shaping a fairer and 'greener' global economy.

See Climate Policy Implementation Check briefs. <https://www.climate-transparency.org/implementationcheck>

See Climate Policy Implementation Check briefs. <https://www.climate-transparency.org/implementationcheck>

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



4. SUMMARY OF THE PRIORITY AREAS - THE ENERGY JUST TRANSITION

The Energy Just Transition [EJT] agenda presents a multidimensional challenge that demands coordinated action across energy systems, social structures, and economic frameworks. At its core, the transition seeks to reconcile climate imperatives with the realities of energy poverty, employment disruption, gender inequality, and industrial transformation, while ensuring that infrastructure and innovation are equipped to support longterm resilience. The key priority areas for the EJT Working Group include Energy Security and Climate Change; Universal Access to Clean, Affordable, and Sustainable Energy by 2030 | Eliminating Energy Poverty; People and Worker Centric Transition; Gender and Social Inclusion for Energy Justice; Industrial Decarbonisation with inclusion of MSME; Sustainable Infrastructure; Technology and Innovation; Financing and Governance

Fossil fuel reserves remain dominant but are finite and geopolitically concentrated, creating vulnerabilities in global supply chains. The transition to renewable energy creates a new dependency on critical minerals essential for clean technologies. Electric vehicles require 6x the mineral inputs of conventional cars, while wind plants need 9x more minerals than gas-fired plants. Global renewable capacity grew 15% in 2024, primarily solar-driven. However, achieving the UNFCCC commitment to triple renewable capacity by 2030 requires 16% annual growth—a challenging acceleration from current levels.

Africa possesses 60% of global solar potential but accounts for only 1% of installed capacity, well below the African Union's 300GW target for 2030. The transition also increases mineral dependency for lithium, cobalt, and rare earths. The top three producers control over 75% of global output. Since 2010, mineral requirements per power generation unit have risen by 50%. Renewable deployment faces additional constraints, which include high land footprints [for utility-scale installations] and intermittency issues [requiring storage solutions]. Additionally, transport electrification through EVs and green hydrogen accelerates critical mineral demand.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Linked closely to these challenges is SDG 7, which calls for universal access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy by 2030. However, energy poverty remains entrenched, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The IEA projects that USD 30 billion annually will be required until 2030 for universal electricity access, with USD 20 billion [67%] specifically allocated to sub-Saharan Africa. The 2023 New Delhi G20 Declaration committed to triple global renewable power capacity and double energy efficiency improvement rates by 2030, and in 2025, the Dar es Salaam Declaration, endorsed by 48 African countries, committed to expanding electricity access. Despite policy momentum, SDG 7 progress remains critically uneven across regions. For instance, while Egypt and Algeria have close to 100% electricity access, there are countries in Africa that have less than 25% electricity access, such as South Sudan [6%], Democratic Republic of Congo [22%], Chad [12%], and Niger [20%], to name a few. The SDG 7 Tracker Report 2025 underscores the need for fundamental shifts in production, distribution, and consumption of energy, underpinned by investments, enabling policies, innovation, and collaboration among governments, the private sector, international organizations, and civil society. The G20 must address the USD 20 billion annual financing gaps in sub-Saharan Africa while ensuring equitable access progression across the 94-point disparity range in African electricity access rates.

Globally, an estimated 67 million people are employed in the energy sector [including energy supply, power sector, end-use efficiency, and vehicle manufacturing], with approximately 8.2 million in oil and 4.1 million in natural gas. In India, an estimated 13 million people are engaged in the coal ecosystem. According to Vasudha Foundation's Power Outlook Series, 17% are part of the formal workforce, while 83% are engaged informally. Around half a million people are engaged as mine workers across ~350 coal mines. Further, South Africa's coal value chain supports over 120,000 direct jobs and countless indirect livelihoods. Therefore, a people and worker-centric transition is essential to ensure reskilling and upskilling of the current workforce employed in the fossil-fuel economy and conventional energy systems. The principle of "no one should be left behind" must be the backbone of the transition journey, especially for informal workers and those employed across the value chains of the various sectors.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency [IRENA], women make up about 32% of the renewable energy workforce, compared to 22% in the broader energy sector, indicating that while women are better represented in renewables, they still face barriers in technical and representation roles. Additionally, over 60% of women in 'brown' energy jobs face significant skill gaps and job losses when attempting to transition to green roles, reflecting systemic barriers rooted in unequal access to STEM education, unpaid care burdens, and limited leadership opportunities. Moreover, women make up only 15% of the global mining workforce across the top 100 mining companies and are working across the value chain of the fossil-fuel industries. With limited representation and few gender-sensitive safety nets, women, already carrying disproportionate care responsibilities, are highly vulnerable to transition risks. Energy transitions must address gender gaps and community marginalization by embedding women's leadership, participation, and access to finance, assets, and skills, while recognizing wider social and economic impacts.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



Industry accounts for approximately 20% of direct global CO₂ emissions, largely from heavy manufacturing and fuel combustion. Decarbonizing industry, particularly industrial energy and electrification, is vital for the global climate goals. It is important to note that within the industrial sector, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises [MSMEs] contribute up to 70% of total employment worldwide, especially in emerging economies. About 40% of formal MSMEs in developing countries face a financing and technical gap. Targeted financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives are needed to ensure that these enterprises are not left behind. Therefore, mainstreaming just transitions in high-employment value chains, especially those with strong MSME participation, is crucial.

Existing infrastructure in both developed and developing countries is increasingly unable to withstand the rising frequency and intensity of climate disasters such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes. Failures in infrastructure cause severe losses of life, livelihoods, and economic assets. Building sustainable, climate-resilient infrastructure, therefore, forms the physical backbone of this transition. It is essential for energy and urban expansion, particularly in the Global South, where pressures to meet development needs and withstanding environmental shocks are greatest.

Technology and innovation are key engines of this transition forward. Clean energy systems and industrial processes must be adaptable, affordable, and relevant to local contexts. Therefore, technology transfers that “fit the local context” will be essential for self-reliance and economic development of the Global South. Preserving and promoting indigenous and traditional technologies is also vital, as these often embody low-carbon and sustainable principles. Examples include passive solar design in India’s Himalayan states, which reduces heating and cooling energy needs, and biogas digesters that convert organic waste into energy. The G20 could facilitate global sharing of such knowledge and foster peer learning through exposure visits.

Climate financing needs to be widened to go beyond a mitigation-centric approach and to include the aspects of justice and transition risk reduction. Within the broader framework of climate finance, emphasis is needed on equitable, accessible, and non-debt-creating transition finance. Further, it will be beneficial to establish dedicated funds for underrepresented regions, vulnerable groups, and women, as well as to create mechanisms for participatory budgeting and monitoring.

In 2024, the International Monetary Fund estimated that Emerging Markets and Developing Economies [EMDEs] in Asia-Pacific alone would need USD 1.1 trillion annually for climate mitigation and adaptation; however, actual investments fall short by over USD 0.8 trillion. In 2022, only one-third of funds to developing countries were grants, with the rest in loans that add to the existing financial burden. Least developed countries spent USD 59 billion on debt servicing in 2022, twice the USD 28 billion they received in climate finance. Financing frameworks must also account for the costs of power plant repurposing, mine restoration, and worker transition support. Dedicated funds for these purposes are essential, alongside participatory budgeting and monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability. Further, a well-designed governance framework can steer the transition in a way that upholds the rights and needs of all stakeholders, especially those most vulnerable to its impacts. An effective governance strategy for a just transition will require participatory decision-making, transparency, and accountability.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Building on the issue analysis, it is clear that a successful Energy Just Transition depends on translating commitments into concrete, inclusive, and accountable actions. The following recommendations seek to align energy transition needs, global climate commitments, with social and economic justice by prioritising universal access to clean energy, protecting the rights and livelihoods of workers and communities, advancing gender equality, and ensuring equitable financing and governance. These recommendations aim to help G20 members and partners shape transition pathways that are fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

5.1 GOVERNANCE REFORMS

5.1.1 G20 Member States must domesticate climate commitments into binding instruments, with inclusive indicators across energy, land, water, and air, with peer review mechanisms to monitor progress on Nationally Determined Contributions [NDCs].

5.1.2 Integrate the needs of women, youth, rural communities, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and LGBTIQ+ groups in climate and energy policies at all levels with their active participation

5.1.3 Institutionalize feminist-responsive climate governance and recognize the burden of unpaid care work on women in responding to climate-induced disasters.

5.1.4 Eradicate energy poverty by accelerating universal access to clean, affordable, sustainable energy for all by 2030.

5.1.5 Promote inclusivity in transition by supporting direct and indirect workers, value chains, informal economies, women, and vulnerable groups.

5.1.6 Advance sustainable climate and EJT finance and governance through equitable, accessible, and nondebt-creating mechanisms, while strengthening accountability and transparency for robust transition and community participation

5.2 LEGAL AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS:

5.2.1 Uphold Free, Prior, and Informed Consent [FPIC] in all climate, including energy projects, and respect Indigenous intellectual property rights.

5.2.2 Integrate Indigenous knowledge into biodiversity, mitigation, energy, and adaptation policy and legislative frameworks.

5.2.3 Shift from loan-based climate finance to transparent, equitable, accessible, non-debt-creating, and cancellation; reparative funding and taxing the super-rich; establish dedicated funds for underrepresented regions, vulnerable groups, and women.

5.3 UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CLEAN, AFFORDABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY BY 2030 | ELIMINATING ENERGY POVERTY:

5.3.1 Support countries in tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030 through technology transfer, typology development, financial and knowledge-sharing, including regional grid integration [e.g., One Sun One World One Grid].

5.3.2 Phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2030 fairly and equitably without compromising energy access and SDG7. Enhance energy security by tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030.

5.3.3 Develop a fair, equitable, and transparent framework for critical minerals to prevent exploitation of local communities and ecosystems.

5.3.4 Embed Energy Sovereignty principles in all transition pathways and support African countries in achieving 100% electricity and energy access by 2030 through technical, financial, and capacity-building support for decentralized renewable energy and clean cooking.

5.3.5 Create a comprehensive framework to protect workers from unintended consequences of low-carbon transitions, including a dedicated fund for transition risks in both the Global North and South.

5.3.6 Adopt gender-responsive policy frameworks at every stage of EJT planning and ensure representation in decision-making to promote women's leadership and entrepreneurship.

5.3.7 Promote inclusive sustainable water management in mining and agriculture to conserve freshwater for domestic use and ecosystems.

5.3.8 Develop integrated air quality systems and enforce legally binding frameworks to reduce emissions from transport and industry.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



5.3.9 Implement inclusive land policies to empower women farmers through collective ownership and market access.

5.3.10 Enforce a G20 moratorium on ocean mining and safeguard coastal communities, including compensation for oil spills and inclusive consultations on blue economy proposals.

5.3.11 Adopt the Minamata Convention and ban hazardous substances like mercury and pesticides; enforce stricter controls on plastic waste and promote organic alternatives in artisanal gold mining and agriculture.

5.4 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES: SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION:

5.4.1 Scale up community-led conservation and ecosystem restoration; enforce policies against capitalist extractivism to safeguard people, oceans, and the planet.

5.4.2 Channel resources towards G20 legacy projects such as the Rhino Renaissance Campaign to protect endangered species globally.

5.4.3 Jointly develop low-carbon technologies and frameworks to support MSME decarbonization, diversification, and access to capital.

5.4.4 Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure that accounts for physical and transition risks, prioritizing decentralized solutions to all historically excluded and marginalised communities.

5.4.5 Prioritize technologies for impact over scale, such as energy storage solutions.

5.4.6 Promote circular economy principles [3Rs: recycle, reuse, reduce] 5Rs: refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle through training and technological innovation, especially for critical minerals and metals.

5.4.7 Create financing channels that support both infrastructure and social protection, including 'green' skilling, reskilling, and upskilling.

5.4.8 Allocate national budget resources to train human and environmental rights activists in water and air quality monitoring and include all stakeholders affected, regardless of their gender, gender identity, rural or urban location, origin, age, or mobility, in water and air quality monitoring.

5.4.9 Invest in climate-smart agriculture and time-saving technologies to free up women's time for economic activities.

5.4.10 Support strategic research and public awareness on biodiversity, ocean, circular economies, and marine spatial planning.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org



5.5 CIVIL SOCIETY: PROGRAMMATIC ACTIONS:

5.5.1 Train environmental activists and communities to monitor and hold duty bearers accountable for implementing ratified policies and treaties – hold power to promise!

5.5.2 Promote knowledge-sharing on sustainable practices and build capacity on biodiversity using intersectional approaches across the G20.

5.5.3 Mobilize sustained funding for community-based organizations addressing gender-based violence and economic empowerment in mining-affected and marginalized communities.

5.5.4 Build capacity for environmental activists, duty holders in government, and affected communities, especially historically excluded and marginalised communities, to monitor water, land, air quality, and health impacts, especially in areas affected by industrial mining activities.

6. CALL TO ACTION:

South Africa's G20 Presidency offers a timely opportunity to catalyze a new era of environmental diplomacy hinged on a bold and justice-people-driven agenda that is inclusive, resilient, and rooted in equality and solidarity.

The climate crisis cannot be resolved without confronting the structural foundations of environmental capitalism, racism, and sexism. The EJT agenda is not a singular challenge but a constellation of interlinked issues and requires a holistic framework that integrates energy security, universal access, green skilling, gender equity, fair finance, resilient infrastructure, and context-sensitive innovation.

Only through such an integrated approach can the transition be truly just in delivering climate action that uplifts communities, strengthens economies, and safeguards the planet. Only through such an integrated approach can the transition be truly just in delivering climate action that uplifts all communities regardless of economic status, ability, origin, age, gender, gender identity, strengthens economies, and safeguards the planet for all who live on it.

The G20 Ministerial Meeting to be hosted for the first time on African soil offers a historic opportunity to shift power, restore dignity, and place the needs of the 90% at the center of global climate governance. Future generations will judge us by our courage to act, not our intentions.

presidency@c20southafrica.org | www.c20southafrica.org

