



**MINISTRY**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THEMBI SIMELANE**

**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH  
AFRICA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE W20 SUMMIT UNDER SOUTH AFRICA'S G20  
PRESIDENCY**

**14 OCTOBER 2025**

**VIVARI HOTEL AND SPA, JOHANNESBURG**

Programme Director,

Co-Chairs of W20 South Africa, Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller and Dr Sindiswa Mzamo,

Premier Panyaza Lesufi, Premier of Gauteng Province, in absentia

Dr Naledi Pandor, Former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, in absentia

UN Women Representative in South Africa Multi Country Office, Ms Aleta Miller,

Ms Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Princess of Africa Foundation,

Representatives of G20 Engagement Groups,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good day,

It is both a distinct honour and a profound responsibility to address you today as I receive the 2025 W20 South Africa Communiqué on behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.

South Africa is a proud host of the G20 for the year 2025, under the theme “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”, rooted in the spirit of *Ubuntu*, the belief that our shared humanity must guide our policies, our partnerships, and our progress.

We commend W20 South Africa for having successfully presided over this pivotal engagement group, and for ensuring that gender equality remains central in the work of the G20.

As the only African country that is a permanent member of the G20, South Africa carries a unique and special responsibility. We are the fourth in a powerful cycle of Global South presidencies, following Indonesia, India, and Brazil. This moment offers us the opportunity to bring the African Agenda, together with the priorities of the Global South, into the heart of global governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, within the framework of the G20 Social Summit, we hold the Women Twenty in high regard.

The receiving of this declaration is a testament to the power of collective voice and the urgency of coordinated action. It reflects the values we hold dear, equity, dignity, and solidarity, and it challenges us to move beyond rhetoric to measurable impact.

We gather here not only as policymakers and practitioners, but as custodians of a shared global responsibility, to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind in our pursuit of sustainable development, peace, and prosperity.

We meet at a time when the global community is called upon to reaffirm its commitment to inclusive development, gender equality, and social justice. The 2025 W20 Declaration, emerging from robust engagement and consensus, provides a timely and transformative roadmap for action.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The introduction of the Johannesburg Goals, to reduce the female labour force participation gap, the gender wage gap, and the unpaid care gap by 35% by 2035, is a significant milestone.

These goals align with South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which places inclusive growth and gender equity at the centre of our

national vision. We support the proposal for these goals to be tracked by the OECD and ILO, ensuring transparency and accountability across G20 member states.

We fully endorse the Communiqué's call for sustained financing for equality. South Africa has adopted a Gender-Responsive Budgeting Framework, led by National Treasury, to ensure that public expenditure contributes meaningfully to gender equity outcomes. This is complemented by our commitment to strengthening gender-disaggregated data systems, as reflected in the Gender Equality Monitoring Framework and the National Strategy for Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF).

Accordingly, South Africa recognizes that accountability must be both institutional and operational. At the national level, we have taken concrete steps to embed gender mainstreaming into our governance architecture as illustrated in the above policy framework.

We support the urgent call to eradicate modern slavery, particularly forms that disproportionately affect women and girls. South Africa's National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, alongside our ratification of the ILO Protocol on Forced Labour, reflects our commitment to ethical labour practices and survivor-centred justice.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In the economic domain, we align with the W20's recommendations to accelerate entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. Through the Presidential Task Team on Women's Economic Empowerment and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, we are expanding access to finance, procurement opportunities, and enterprise development for women-led businesses.

The Communiqué's recognition of the care economy is timely. South Africa is working to integrate care into formal economic planning through the Social Protection Policy Framework, and we recognise the call to invest 10% of national income in care systems by 2030.

On education, STEM, and digital inclusion, we support national digital inclusion programmes and targeted scholarships for women and girls in high-growth sectors. These efforts are aligned with the Digital Economy Masterplan, the National Skills Development Strategy, and the Women in ICT Strategy. We welcome the proposal for a Global Index on AI and Gender Equality and stand ready to contribute to its development.

In the area of climate justice and food security, South Africa continues to promote gender-responsive climate finance and inclusive participation in energy and environmental governance. Our efforts are guided by the Climate Change Bill, the National Climate Change Response Policy, and the Operation Phakisa Oceans Economy Programme.

We reaffirm our commitment to health equity, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the integration of mental health into public health strategies. These priorities are supported by the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, the Adolescent and Youth Health Policy, and the Integrated SRHR Strategy.

Finally, we strongly support the W20's call to treat violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a public health emergency. South Africa continues to implement the NSP GBVF, strengthen legal frameworks, and promote women's leadership in peacebuilding and humanitarian response, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the African Union Protocol on Women's Rights.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Distinguished Delegates, South Africa will host the G20 Social Summit on 18–20 November 2025 at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg. At the handover of the G20 Presidency in Brazil last year, President Cyril Ramaphosa commended Brazil for elevating the participation of social and civil society groups through the first-ever G20 Social Summit. He further committed that South Africa would continue with this innovative platform. In line with this commitment, the Social Summit is now a central feature of our Presidency. It aims to expand participation of civil society and non-governmental organisations, ensuring their voices influence decision-making and ultimately shape the G20 Leaders' Declaration.

To this end, the President appointed Minister Khumbudzo Ntshavheni and Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka as Co-Convenors of the Social Summit, representing government and civil society. Together, they are tasked with leading the Organising Committee, facilitating broad stakeholder engagement, and ensuring alignment with G20 priorities.

The thirteen G20 Engagement Groups, including the W20, will play an instrumental role in shaping the Social Summit. Through the Public Participation Programme (PPP), we are ensuring an inclusive and transparent process to solicit Declarations from engagement groups and society more broadly. This approach seeks to amplify diverse voices business, labour, youth, women, academia, and grassroots communities ensuring that their perspectives are integrated into the G20 process.

As we gather here today for the W20 Summit, your recommendations will be handed over as a key contribution to the Leaders' Declaration. This represents the culmination of your year-long work, and it is our responsibility to ensure that these voices are heard at the highest levels. These efforts are now converging in this important platform.

Distinguished Guests, I am honoured to receive your recommendations, and I commit to presenting them to the leadership overseeing South

Africa's G20 Presidency. Working collectively and focusing on common goals is the only way to address the challenges that confront us.

As I conclude, I invite the W20 stakeholders gathered here today to contribute actively to the upcoming Social Summit in South Africa. Through combined effort and solidarity, we can overcome even the toughest challenges and chart a path towards inclusive, sustainable, and resilient societies.

I wish to thank you for all your efforts throughout the year that resulted in this declaration. I look forward to seeing you at the G20 Social Summit on 18-20 November 2025.

I thank you.