



SPEECH

BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF G20 SOCIAL SUMMIT “WATER AS SOCIAL
SERVICE AND AN ECONOMIC ENABLER”**

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BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG

Programme Director,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Members of the G20,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

It is an honour to speak at the G20 Social Summit, a platform where global priorities meet the lived realities of our people. On behalf of the South Africa Department of Water and Sanitation, I thank you for inviting our contribution to this official G20 Summit.

Today, we gather with a shared recognition: water is no longer a sectoral issue, it is a global economic, social, and security priority that underpins every Sustainable Development Goal, every climate commitment, and every pathway to shared growth and prosperity.

Our intervention today, at the G20 Social Summit, is rooted in a journey that began nearly a decade ago.

In 2016, the High-Level Panel on Water was launched by the then UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim. At this event nine years ago, eleven Heads of State gathered to rethink how the world approaches water.

Following their recommendations, the African Union established the Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) and the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa.

This AU High Level Panel set us the task to mobilise at least 30 billion US Dollars a year by 2030 to close Africa's water investment gap.

South Africa is proud to be a founding member of this Panel. As part of our contribution, in response to the call from the African Union and global water community, in August this year, we answered the call to host an AU-AIP Africa Water Investment Summit in the context of our G20 Presidency, which culminated in the adoption of the Cape Town Declaration on Water Investments.

Excellences and delegates, following the AU-African water investment Summit, I am proud to share some of the key outcomes for consideration in the G20 Social Summit.

The African Water investment Summit identified 10 to 12 billion dollars annual water pipelines across the Continent.

His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative-Global Outlook Council and Global Water Investment Platform.

The G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative positions water at the highest levels of the global political and financial agenda from G20 and COP30 to the UN 2026 Water Conference and beyond.

The launch of the Global Outlook Council on Water Investments will see the Africa Water Investment Programme scaled up into a Global Water Investment Platform, as a mechanism to follow up on commitments mobilised and catalyse water investments worldwide.

In Cape Town, during the launch of this G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative, H.E President Cyril Ramaphosa, acknowledge and thanked invited leaders as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for initiating the first G20 Water Dialogue under its G20 Presidency in 2020, which considered water as a key ingredient for socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, human health, and well-being.

The process was sustained by the subsequent G20 Presidencies of Italy in 2021, Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023 and Brazil in 2024.

The Global Outlook Council and the Global Water Investment Platform will serve as the world's premier high-level political and investment platform on water.

It will track progress, unlock finance, report annually and align efforts across the G20, UN, multilateral development banks and the private sector.

The message from Cape Town was clear:

If the world continues to under-invest in water, we will under-deliver on development, climate resilience, and economic growth.

If we invest adequately and strategically, water can become a global engine for jobs, industrialisation, innovation, and social stability.

Today, we bring that message to the G20 Social Summit.

Following the Cape Town Summit, on 22 September 2025, on the margins of the 80th UN General Assembly in New York, the African Union and global leaders held a consultative dialogue and developed a Roadmap for the G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative designed to expand the Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) into a Global Water Investment Platform (GIP), a mechanism to mobilize water investments worldwide.

The GIP will:

- Mobilise bankable pipelines of water projects across all regions
- Provide de-risking, blended finance, and partnerships with public and private investors
- Support governments to unlock investments at scale
- Facilitate matchmaking of projects with finance between governments, financiers, and partners.

- Strengthen global cooperation on water investments

As announced by H.E President Cyril Ramaphosa, complementing the GIP is the Global Outlook Council on Water Investments (GOC)—a high-level body of invited Heads of State, global leaders supported by champions, and international institutions tasked with shaping long-term investment and policy pathways toward 2030.

Excellencies, the world cannot afford fragmented efforts. The climate crisis, demographic pressures, and economic disruptions require a coordinated, global response to water security.

This Social Summit gives us a unique opportunity to commit to scale investment mechanisms, not only policy commitments; blended finance models that mobilise public and private capital; inclusive governance that empowers women, youth, and vulnerable communities, innovation, and digital transformation to unlock efficiency and data-driven water systems; and strengthening global solidarity, especially with the Global South

Today, I invite the G20, Ministers, Heads of Delegation, and partners to:

Endorse the formal establishment of the G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative: Global Outlook Council and Global Water Investment Platform (GIP) and welcome the African Union Cape Town Declaration on Water Investments

Water is not simply a development issue—It is a foundation for peace, prosperity, and planetary stability.

Africa has taken the first step. Today, the G20 takes the next.

I thank you.