17 November 2025

Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa
President, Republic of South Africa
Chair, Group of Twenty (G20)

Chair Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa and G20 leaders:

Your Excellencies:

The World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council, Council for World Mission and United Society Partners in the Gospel embrace the theme of the 2025 G20 Leaders' Summit, "**Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability!,"** and the emphasis to make progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the spirit of Ubuntu.

Our organizations believe that a fairer, climate-resilient world requires nothing less than a New International Financial and Economic Architecture that:

- Is grounded in the principles of economic, social and climate justice;
- Serves the real economy of production and employment instead of financial speculation, which can be driven by recent developments in AI-technology;
- Limits greed and the concentration of wealth and power;
- Accounts for social and environmental responsibilities and invests in communities and planetary restoration.

The world today is marked by unprecedented economic, social, and environmental crises. Economic inequality has reached levels that threaten social stability. According to the Oxfam Report 2023, nearly two-thirds of all wealth created since 2020, a total of $42 trillion, went to the richest 1%. This is almost twice as much money as the other 99% of the world's population. A specific yet interconnected marker of injustice is an increase of global public debt to over $100 trillion, highlighting a systemic imbalance in which financial burdens are increasingly overshadowing economic output. Developing nations face mounting debt servicing costs that often exceed their expenditures on essential services like health and education, compromising the fundamental rights of their populations. This escalating debt crisis reflects a broader injustice, where the financial architecture perpetuates inequality, underscoring the need for urgent systemic changes that prioritize human rights and equitable development over unsustainable fiscal policies.

Today, fiscal policies often prioritize debt-driven bailouts and tax incentives that predominantly benefit wealthy corporations and the affluent class. Consequently, the political influence of the rich shapes policies, undermining democratic ideals and neglecting the needs of marginalized communities. While Western nations bail out their banks and corporations, African (including the African Diaspora), Latin American, Caribbean, Asian, and Pacific countries are urged to tighten their belts and privatize their resources. The message is clear: some lives matter more than others.

The same forces that keep nations in economic bondage are the architects of climate devastation. The wealth of the Global North was built on centuries of colonial extraction, fossil fuel exploitation, and ecological destruction. Now, those who contributed the least to climate change—small island nations, Indigenous communities, and the rural poor—are compelled to borrow money to recover from hurricanes, floods, and rising seas. This is ecological theft. This is climate colonialism. The debt crisis and the climate crisis are not separate—they are two sides of the same imperial coin.

Our organizations, representing 600 million Christians around the world, welcome and support the proposal of the G20 Presidency to work towards solidarity, equality and sustainability by encouraging a paradigm shift to "situate inequalities at the heart of economic policy making."[1] We agree that "these challenges are difficult to overcome given crippling sovereign debt levels that force many countries to sacrifice their developmental obligations to service unmanageable debts."[2] We urge you, the G 20 leaders, to make decisions towards justice for the 99% of the world's population, and not for the benefit of the already super rich. We demand actions according to the calls of the Turn Debt into Hope campaign:

1. End the debt crisis now by cancelling and addressing unjust and unsustainable debts, without placing economic policy conditions.
2. Prevent debt crises from occurring again by addressing their root causes and reforming the global financial system to prioritize people and the planet.
3. Establish a permanent, transparent, binding, and comprehensive debt framework within the United Nations.

More specifically, we make the following demands to deepen the structural change necessary for a true Jubilee:

- Establish a United Nations Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt, recognizing the shortcomings of the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments in providing timely and effective resolutions to debt crises.
- Recognize and address ecological debt, end exploitative extractivism, and provide financing for climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage through non-debt-creating funds without imposing conditions on economic policy.
- Reject debt-for-nature swaps that result in further commodification of nature, displacement, and undermining of Indigenous and rural autonomy.
- Reject austerity measures as a means of development or fiscal responsibility while protecting social spending.
- Conduct transparent debt audits in countries at high and medium risk of debt distress, involving civil society participation, to evaluate the legitimacy of debts.
- Impose meaningful taxes on high net-worth individuals, financial speculators, and multinational corporations, so they pay their fair share and stop extracting from our communities.
- Enforce corporate accountability: Hold transnational corporations legally accountable for environmental destruction, labor abuses, and human rights violations.

[1] https://g20.org/g20-south-africa/g20-presidency/
[2] https://g20.org/g20-south-africa/g20-presidency/

- Recognize and redistribute care: Build systems that value and resource care work. Prioritize public investment in health, education, child and elder care, as well as in the social safety-net.
- Act against hunger: Drive public investment into supporting local food systems, fair markets, and food sovereignty so that no one, anywhere, is left to starve in a world of plenty.

We pray that your deliberations and decisions be indeed guided by the spirit of Ubuntu to increase **"Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability."**

Prof Rev Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches

Rev Dr Setri Nyomi
Interim General Secretary
World Communion of Reformed Churches

Anne Burghardt

Rev Dr Anne Burghardt
General Secretary
Lutheran World Federation

Rev Dr Reynaldo Ferreira Leao Neto
General Secretary
World Methodist Council

Rev Dr Jooseop Keum
General Secretary
Council for World Mission

Duncan S. Dormor

Rev Dr Duncan Dormor
General Secretary
United Society Partners in the Gospel

Copies:
H.E. Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations
Dr Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund
Mr Ajay Banga, President, World Bank