



Press Statement

ZIMCODD Reflections on the 2025 G20 Summit, South Africa The Imperative for Global Reform

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The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) joins African civil society, social movements, labour networks, and global economic justice partners in reflecting on the significance of the 2025 G20 Summit in South Africa. The Group of Twenty (G20) consists of 19 countries and the European Union (EU). As global inequality, debt crises, climate change, and geopolitical tensions deepen, Africa stands at a pivotal moment. Although the G20 is described as a global leadership forum, the reality for millions of Africans is stark: global decisions are made about them, without them, and often against their interests.

The African proverb **“When elephants fight, the grass suffers”** illustrates the power dynamics shaping the Global South. Whether powerful nations compete or ally, less powerful economies feel the effects of decisions they did not make. The G20 amplifies these rivalries and alliances, while ordinary people experience the consequences: austerity, debt, displacement, joblessness, and reduced civic freedoms.

We are concerned that the G20 remains an exclusive group dominated by wealthy economies. Africa’s participation, despite South Africa’s membership, is largely symbolic. Decisions on taxation, debt restructuring, climate financing, and trade that most affect Africa are still made by those who benefit from the current global order. It is indefensible that the African Union (AU), representing over 1.4 billion people and the world’s fastest-growing population, has only one country (South Africa) at the G20 table. It is difficult to justify that the AU is not a full member, while the EU is represented both as a bloc and through individual member states. The AU represents a significant economic force: 55 countries, a GDP exceeding US\$3 trillion, the world’s largest free-trade bloc (AfCFTA), substantial mineral resources, and a trillion-dollar consumer market.

ZIMCODD notes that initiatives such as the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and the Common Framework have not resolved Africa’s debt crisis. These processes are creditor-driven, slow, and place the burden on citizens rather than lenders. Without debt audits, full cancellation of illegitimate debt, mandatory private creditor participation, and transparent lending, debt dependency will continue to worsen. Africa requires structural justice, not temporary solutions.

We are concerned by a global tax system that disadvantages low-income countries. The G20's support for the OECD as the authority on international tax rules sidelines developing nations and protects multinational corporations that exploit tax regulations, depriving Africa of significant revenue. ZIMCODD supports a UN Tax Convention to ensure equal participation for all countries.

We recognise that the G20's approach to climate finance, which relies on loans, exacerbates Africa's debt distress, penalises affected communities, and benefits polluters. We call for climate justice through grant-based finance, loss and damage reparations, binding accountability mechanisms, and an end to carbon colonialism, particularly in the extraction of critical minerals.

We further recognise that Africa's extensive deposits of lithium, cobalt, gold, platinum, and rare earth minerals have prompted renewed competition among G20 economies, often leaving host communities poorer. ZIMCODD calls for the recognition of community rights, the promotion of local beneficiation, and the protection of the environment.

To make the G20 a people-centred, inclusive, and pro-poor platform, global decision-making must be democratised. This can be achieved by establishing permanent African Union representation at the G20, reforming global tax and debt governance, and promoting meaningful civil society participation instead of symbolic consultations.

ZIMCODD affirms that meaningful change will result from organised citizens working for equality and justice, rather than from elite gatherings. Through SAPSN and other alliances, we will build people's power, challenge extractivism, and advocate for fair global finance. Our generation must resist exploitative policies that liberalise, privatise, and expose Africa to resource extraction, resulting in the loss of land, water, and livelihoods while benefiting multinational corporations.

About ZIMCODD

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development is a social and economic justice coalition working to promote citizen agency, accountable governance, debt justice, fair taxation and equitable development in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.

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