



Revitalizing Multilateralism

Call for Action to the G20 Leaders: recommendations from the Global Solutions Initiative

- 1. Strengthen global problem-solving: Establish a permanent, cross-presidency dialogue mechanism for a multilateralism that includes global civil society**
- 2. Measure what matters: Develop annual indicators for solidarity, agency, material gain and environmental sustainability**
- 3. Assume climate responsibility: Step up NDCs and shorten time to net zero, stop fossil fuel subsidies, and price emissions of international travel**
- 4. Prioritize health prevention over treatment: Set up a Health Preparedness Task Force to implement these principles**
- 5. Regulate digital transformation to bring back competition in the digital world and return control over personal data to users**
- 6. Ensure equal opportunities: Expand employer-based training and react comprehensively to new work arrangements**

The Global Solutions Summit 2021 brought more than 180 thought leaders together to discuss strategies for the Italian G20 priorities “People, Planet and Prosperity”. This call for action for the attention of the G20 Leaders has been derived from statements and quotes from a community which gathered at the Global Solutions Summit 2021, from policy briefs which can be found on the G20 Insights platform and on the website of the Italian T20 Presidency.

This appeal has been curated by the Global Solutions Initiative and is not an official T20 document. Sources of the following proposals – be it quotes, panel discussions or policy briefs – can be provided by the Global Solutions Initiative.

1. Strengthen global problem-solving: Establish a permanent, cross-presidency dialogue mechanism for a multilateralism that includes global civil society

Formally establish a permanent, cross-presidency dialogue mechanism that ensures continuous agenda-setting and coordinated global problem-solving. The dialogue should not only involve the Troika of presidencies, but be more forward-looking and should critically involve actors from global civil society, e.g. G20 related engagement groups, local entities, women, representatives of future generations. The discretion to set own priorities should remain with the acting presidency.


After some years of backlash against international cooperation the year 2021 brings a revival of multilateralism. This is good news: global challenges are manifold and require functional and trusted global governance. Furthermore, we will only be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through global effort and coordinated collaboration. Inclusive multilateralism requires that we consistently and systematically include the global civil society to gain legitimacy, and organize a fair representation of people in multilateral procedures including less powerful and more vulnerable groups, local perspectives, and future generations in order to overcome departmentalized thinking (silo-mentality).

These principles should guide the creation of new institutions as well as the reform of established institutions on all levels (local, national and international). While problems must always be addressed at the level at which they occur, effective global problem-solving must entail consistent policymaking at local, regional, national and global level. The involved actor coalitions should go beyond government and be pertinent to the problem to be solved. International institutions dealing with planetary challenges need to establish permanent secretariats or advisory boards with diverse stakeholders.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Strengthen global problem-solving


Paul Martin, Former Prime Minister, Canada and Founding Chair of the G20 Finance Ministers Group:

"The finance ministers, who took the initiative on creating the G20, must now open that door to the G20 ministers who are responsible for the environment, climate change, and for health, so that each can take the lead in their ministerial responsibility [...] So what's required now is not just some kind of a pretty communiqué, it is a detailed plan for the implementation of collective action and the steps that are going to be required to achieve it. That responsibility falls itself with the environment ministers, on the health ministers, and through them, obviously back to their governments." 


Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation, India:

"This is the time to rewire financing frameworks, rewire governance frameworks, rewire political leadership, but most importantly, rebrand G20. Take it to the people of the world, make it seem like an organization that responds to their vulnerabilities, that provides them opportunities, and that is creating a world that is fairer and more equitable." 


Giampiero Massolo, President, Italian Institute for International Political Studies:

"No longer seek multilateralism as exclusively centered on international organizations, (...) but switching to a concept that I would name plurilateralism. That is, having involved states, willing states that are willing to cooperate, other key stakeholders, trying to build and to leverage on shared interests and trying to point out which are the main cross-cutting issues in which it is easier to find common consensus." 

David Sloan Wilson, Professor Emeritus, Binghamton University:

"What we're all, I think, reaching for and calling for, is a combination of a strong bottom-up with a kind of enlightened top-down." 

Arun Maira, Chairman, HelpAge International:

"The social issues, the environmental issues, and the financial issues all blend together in particular ways in different parts of the world. So, we do need cooperation amongst the think tanks up there, like is happening here in the discussion. But most of all, we need cooperation amongst the people who understand the environmental issues locally, the social issues locally and the economic issues locally, the cooperation there, the complex problems that the world is facing today, global problems, can only be solved by local cooperation at the local levels." 

Kevin Rudd, Former Prime Minister, Australia and President of the Asia Society:

"For the G20 to work, we do need a vibrant small Secretariat to keep it pulsating, to keep the blood flowing through the arteries." 

2. Measure what matters: Develop annual indicators for solidarity, agency, material gain and environmental sustainability


There are four broader goals that matter most for human and natural well-being: solidarity, agency, material gain and environmental sustainability. The G20 should task scientists and national statistical offices to establish and implement an internationally consistent and annually measured set of indicators showing the state of, and progress in social, economic, and environmental prosperity.

As long as we measure prosperity only on the basis of economic growth, we can neither address the planetary risks like climate change or biodiversity loss, nor the social risks arising from growing inequalities. A new thinking about progress is needed, with measurement systems reflecting what matters for people and the planet. Only with consistent and regular metrics can the necessary economic transformation be navigated and assessed. Policymaking can then be evaluated against these measures of progress. At the same time, a reform of business reporting reflecting these measures of progress should be supported and accelerated.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Measure what matters


Dennis Snower, President of the Global Solutions Initiative:

“We have no other choice than to take into account (...) environmental sustainability and social inclusion and thriving societies generally. The way forward is to measure these things, to measure them consistently across countries, across time, and across stakeholders so that policy makers, business, and civil organizations all face the same metric.” 


Michelle Muschett, Senior Policy Leader, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford:

“Governments must be equipped with metrics and tools that capture those multiple deprivation that affect people’s lives at the same time and produce relevant data to periodically orient evidence-based policy decisions. And understanding how the combination of the provisions varies across households due to ethnicity, regions, age or gender.” 


Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, Ibero-American General Secretariat:

“We must move beyond measuring poverty through income distribution, and development through gross domestic product, and adopt a multi-dimensional approach with gender equality as a core parameter. If we continue to measure incorrectly, we will continue to make mistakes. So let’s get rid of GDP as equal to development. Let’s get rid of a line of poverty as a measure of all the bads and vulnerabilities that people suffer, and let’s go for a new paradigm with new metrics that really allow for the right decisions to be taken.” 


Alan Donnelly, The G20 Health & Development Partnership:

“If we could get the European Union (...) or the Italian G20 presidency to recommend to the IMF to include health as a factor in what’s called the article for multilateral surveillance procedure of the economy (...) health would stand alongside employment and infrastructure investment, and inflation as a factor in our country’s economic performance.” 

Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD:

“Governments and specifically national statistical offices, and businesses should engage in finding best practices on measuring wellbeing and sustainability.” 

Andrew Watson, Co-Founder, Rethinking Capital:

“Normative accounting for intangibles (...) is designed to be used in decision-making by companies and countries investing into the transition. (...) Current accounting practice looks at net-zero investments and sees them as a cost. It’s a penalty, and the penalty is immediate and certain. And the more you invest, the higher the penalty. This is clearly upside down. (...) Now, the accounting for intangibles looks at the same cost and flips the logic and says: no, these aren’t costs, they’re investments, with one condition that says these are investments into an intangible asset.” 

3. Assume climate responsibility: Step up NDCs and shorten time to net zero, stop fossil fuel subsidies, and price emissions of international travel


As the world's major GHG emitters, the G20 countries are responsible for stepping up climate action: current NDC pledges must be strongly increased and time to net zero must be shortened, emissions due to international travel must be limited and fossil fuel subsidies must be ended.

Any delay in reducing carbon emissions will have disastrous worldwide repercussions for a long time into the future, thus unjustly burdening future generations and single regions with the fallouts, such as more extreme weather events or rising sea levels. The G20 member states produce about 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the G20 countries must fully accept their own responsibility for reducing emissions and agree on a more ambitious commitment to achieve climate neutrality with net zero emissions earlier than 2050, as demanded by a growing international movement led by young people. The G20 must underline again the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and do whatever is necessary to achieve them, in particular increase the deployment of cheap renewable energies, like wind and solar, while making sure that the transition is just and socially accepted. Equally important for slowing down climate change is the protection of biodiversity and natural capital. The G20 economies must accelerate the transition to a circular economy across global value chains through conducive policy and financial frameworks for businesses. Necessary policy changes also include that G20 countries live up to their own ambition to stop fossil fuel subsidies. Instruments such as carbon taxes, carbon prices and carbon border adjustments are important tools to be further discussed multilaterally. All economic actors and institutions must be allied behind the goal of mitigating climate change: government procurements, central bank policy, lending by international financial institutions, as well as investments and reporting by the business sector and consumer behavior.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Assume climate responsibility


John Kirton, Director and Founder of G7 and G20 Research Groups, Co-chair, T20 TF 2 - Climate Change, Sustainable Energy & Environment:

"One, stop fossil fuel subsidies, as the G7 and G20 have promised to do repeatedly for over a decade. The IMF says if we do that, we get over \$5 trillion each year (...) and (...) cut emissions up by 28%. Two, (...) stop subsidizing animal agriculture and the methane and deforestation that they produce. Three, stop multilateral development banks, which G7 members control, from financing "killer coal" (...) At the IMF, we're going to create new special drawing rights. Let's give them to the developing countries that credibly promised to use them to control climate change. (...) And five, price carbon pollution the way Canada does, and the United States should, and impose green revenue tariffs." 


Angel Gurría, former Secretary-General, OECD:

"Let's face it, we will not be able to transition towards a net zero economy, to net zero societies if we do not address the political and the social acceptability. And if we're not able to engineer the just transition that is necessary. So, we need to recouple, align the social and the climate imperatives, which have become the two faces of the same coin." 


Anthony Cox, Deputy Director, Environment, OECD:

"It's all about the political acceptability of carbon pricing, and the redistribution of the revenues from carbon pricing is key here." 


Pascal Lamy, Chair of the Paris Peace Forum:

"The moment the price of carbon goes where it should go in order to properly decarbonise our economies, (...) we cannot do without a carbon border adjustment." 


Shardul Agrawala, Head of Division, Environment and Economy Integration Division, RE-CIRCLE project, OECD:

"The G20 can do a lot more than that, because we're talking about closing material loops, but not necessarily within national boundaries. The international dimension of material flows is very important. This is where trade comes in." 

Isabel Schnabel, Executive Board Member, European Central Bank:

"The central bank itself should disclose how climate-friendly we are (...) in the non-monetary portfolios, and at some point, also in the monetary policy portfolio. And then we should think about whether we could play a catalyst role in disclosures of banks and of firms." 

Izabella Teixeira, Co-Chair of UNEP International Resource Panel:

"The circular economy is part of the new strategic perspectives to promote economic growth. (...) The circular economy also makes sense for developing countries, because it means a chance for these countries to lead to the new global and regional macroeconomic dynamics. In the developing world, we need bridges to be more efficient and faster to promote permanent solutions for sustainable development and the climate agenda. The circular economy is one of these bridges." 

4. Prioritize health prevention over treatment: Set up a Health Preparedness Task Force to implement these principles


The G20 members must agree to reform their national as well as the international health care systems to strengthen prevention over treatment. This requires a Health Preparedness Task Force to navigate the necessary local, regional and global actions. Additionally, the G20 must support equitable access and global production of vaccines with an Emergency Task Force.

Health is a basic human right and as a global public good it should be liberated from the stress of commercialization. As for every public good, access to health around the globe must be inclusive (non-excludable) and sufficient (non-rivalrous). Enhancing public health not only addresses social inequalities and economic growth potential, but also increases resilience against future pandemics or climate-related health risks. In the short term, a fair global vaccine distribution must be ensured by the G20 countries to end the Covid crisis, by transferring vaccines and by building up production capacity. In the longer term, by liberating health services from commercialization, supporting the global provision of universal health care services and a focusing on prevention rather than treatment, the G20 can increase growth potential and improve resilience to future shocks. Investments in global health can help decrease gender inequalities, both directly by alleviating the disproportionate burden of care and domestic work on women, and indirectly by addressing structural issues of informal employment.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Prioritize health prevention over treatment


Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization:

"The COVID-19 pandemic has given us irrefutable evidence that health is a global public good. Health cannot be a luxury for some. It's a fundamental human right, and the foundation of social, economic and political stability." 


Michael Kremer, Professor in Economics, University of Chicago; Nobel Laureate 2019:

"Manufacturing capacity is extremely valuable to society during the pandemic. (...) The IMF estimated (...) just GDP losses at \$500 billion every month. (...) we should invest now in sufficient standby capacity for both the vaccines and for the inputs into the vaccine process. And that's partly standby capacity, standby factories for vaccines that would be ever ready, [and] for inputs we need both standby capacity and stockpiles." 


José Manuel Barroso, Board Chair, Gavi The Vaccine Alliance; Non-Executive Chairman, Goldman Sachs International:

"The more this pandemic continues, the more variants really exist. And the more variants exist, the more likely it will be to have new surges of the pandemic. So, it's also in the interest of the richer countries to avoid this virus to continue circulating all over the world." 


Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; Under-Secretary-General, United Nations:

We [on the African continent] are ten times behind on the vaccinations. And that's the most important in terms of reopening our economies. (...) So, what we are asking for is an on-lending of the SDRs into three facilities. First of all, a facility for low-income countries to help them get access to quick liquidity to continue growing. Secondly, (...) manufacturing more vaccines on the continent, but also that countries that have already been able to vaccinate 54-60% of their populations should on-lend those vaccines to (...) Africans willing to buy the vaccines. (...) And then finally, 75% of Africa's GDP is made out of countries that are low-middle-income and middle-income economies, (...) take away the liquidity premium and ensure that we can go to the markets." 

António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations:

"We need to strengthen the authority of WHO. (...) WHO has no authority (...) we have a multilateral institution that has no teeth. And we need multilateralism to have teeth if we want governance to be in place." 

Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO:

"[We need] to consider vaccines as a global public good. This is the most important element in an international cooperation because this is the protection for any new shock." 

5. Regulate digital transformation to bring back competition in the digital world and return control over personal data to users


The G20 should foster a new international regulation to make sure that users and consumers gain back control over their personal data.

Digitalization has brought societies many benefits. It also offers many possibilities for developing and emerging countries to integrate into global markets. If we do not thoughtfully regulate data ownership and digital transactions, these benefits are at risk. Among the severe problems and challenges that prevent sustainable and broad-based economic and social prosperity are the emergence of a monopolistic data capitalism driven by network effects and the platform economy, and, via disinformation and dark patterns, a disempowerment of the people to act in a fully informed and self-sovereign way, not least in managing their own data. The G20 needs to respond to those challenges by supporting suitable international regulatory approaches, developing principles for the collection and use of data, and supporting the introduction of data trustees. Regulation should be guided by the need for empowering individuals, fostering fair competition and creating trust. Pluralism of media and protection of journalism is a precondition for democracy which needs to be defended in the digital age.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Regulate digital transformation


Shoshana Zuboff, Professor Emerita, Harvard Business School:

"The last 20 years have really overseen the wholesale destruction of privacy. And in my view, that is because we have not yet codified the rights. (...) My view is that the mechanism we need is to actually codify what I think of as epistemic rights, that the right to know about my own private experience, the right to know about my own personal experience (...) the freedom to select what is shared, with whom it is shared, and for what purpose, versus what remains private (...) just as we had to codify workers' rights and codified consumers' rights a century ago." 


Paul Twomey, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation and Global Solutions Fellow:

"We need to empower individuals to have the capacity to have collective bargaining and negotiation back (...) we do need to have a mechanism whereby individuals have some point of leverage." 

Francesca Bria, President, Italian National Innovation Fund:

"If we invest in businesses that can build technology which put fundamental rights and privacy and democracy first, we can also change the business model. And this can underpin a better society with services that really benefit citizens. And one way to do it is (...) clauses in public procurement contracts that mandate companies that are bidding for public money to give back the data to public institution in machine-readable format, so that that data can be considered a public good, a public infrastructure on top of which we can build better health care, better education system, and better citizen services with also better condition for workers, and also with companies paying taxes in Europe." 

Dennis Snower, President of the Global Solutions Initiative:

"Many problems that we currently have in the digital space can be addressed by giving users much more access and control over the data about themselves. So, if, for example, users had complete control over first party private data (...) and if second-party private data would be governed by the same type of regulations as doctor-patient relationships, or lawyer-client relationships, solely in the interest of the data subjects (...) In addition, of course, one would need data commons where people can share data for a specific purpose, and there would be a fiduciary duty on the part of the people organizing the data commons, make sure that the data is only used for that purpose, maybe even technologically impossible to use it for others. And then lastly, official data, which is some data like your name, your passport number (...) should have official authentications. (...) That too is possible on the internet, it would prevent multiple identities. (...) it would make hate speech much more difficult." 

6. Ensure equal opportunities: Expand employer-based training and react comprehensively to new work arrangements

Education, welfare state provisions and infrastructure remain key to support equal opportunities. The pandemic, in combination with rapid technological change, has changed our landscapes of work. This requires fast action from G20 countries to a) support flexible, employer-based training, b) provide infrastructure that enables encompassing participation in this new world of work, c) adapt welfare state policies, and d) modernize family policies. Access to digital services is a common good and precondition for equal opportunities: therefore the G20 needs to develop digital infrastructure for everybody.


Our economic and political systems should serve human needs by empowering individuals to shape their own future. It remains of utmost importance to create equal opportunities and support those in need – both within national boundaries and globally. Our current economic and political systems do not always live up to this goal. The systems are challenged by the consequences of globalization and digitalization, and the economic transformation needed to stay within our planetary boundaries will add to the challenge. With global trends such as automation, digitalization, working from home, aging populations and climate change, inequalities change extremely fast and put different groups of people at economic risk. Progressive taxation and the welfare state, education provision by public and private entities, as well as infrastructure investments remain the most important policy instruments to ensure equality of opportunities. The G20 must ensure that these instruments are constantly adapted to changing circumstances and target those in need.

The pandemic has disproportionately affected women, from a rise in unemployment to an increase in gender-based and domestic violence, and exacerbated existing gender inequalities globally. It has also highlighted the intersectionality of gender discrimination. The G20 must ensure equal access to education, formal employment, and financing, as well as address the gender gap in pay and access to technology. It is critical to expand care infrastructure and to value and support domestic work, in particular the mostly unpaid care work of which women bear the brunt. The G20 governments should lead by example and promote equal representation of women in leadership positions in the private and public sector.


Quotes from the Global Solutions Summit 2021

Ensure equal opportunities


Margo Thomas, Founder & CEO, Women's Economic Imperative:

"We know that women and girls are disproportionately impacted in terms of the costs and the risks of the pandemic. So, when we design systems or safety nets (...) we cannot assume that everybody's needs are the same. And so, we have to calibrate based on the vulnerable populations, the underrepresented populations. I cite the case of women and girls, precisely because I think it's coming to the fore more clearly. Women have left the labor force because of the lack of access to care." 


Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, Ibero-American General Secretariat:

"First, we will not be able to address this equation [the COVID-19 pandemic] without women at the decision-making table. It's not to have a gender perspective, let me be very clear, it's to be there to take decisions. (...) Second, women must be conceived in their diversity and intersectionality." 


Irene Natividad, President, GlobeWomen Research & Education Institute:

"You can't rebuild the economy, you can't reset it with one hand tied behind your back, that one hand being women. So, given the zero population growth, given the need for workers, we need to address how we bring women back to the economy. (...) We need to somehow as nations bring women back into the global workforce." 


Richard Samans, Director of Research, International Labour Organization:

"We need to expand our conception of the welfare state. (...) [It is important to] recognise that we collectively and particularly those in the international community, providing policy advice and development assistance, have been very focused on the aggregates on national income. (...) We've comparatively underinvested, underemphasized in policy a number of institutions which are absolutely crucial for the ability of an economy to diffuse widely the gains. And here I mean labor-related institutions, such as worker protections, labor standards, worker transitions, active labor market policies, and strengthening skills and capabilities, indeed social protection systems." 

Ngairé Woods, Professor & Dean, Blavatnik School of Government:

"The government actually has to step forward and set safety bars. (...) We've seen a shifting of risk to some of the lowest-paid workers in all of our economies, for example consumer industries using zero hour contracts where they risk not having enough consumers coming through the door, (...) that's where the government needs to set a level playing field and say, 'actually, no one can do that.'" 

Sabina Dewan, President and Executive Director, JustJobs Network:

"There's a very dangerous view (...) that the advent of technology is creating new opportunities in gig work for women to work from home, which is both a blessing but also a problem because we actually don't want to relegate women to just doing handicrafts and micro-tasking from home, we actually want women to get out into the workplace, which means still working with employers in order to create (...) an environment that's safe and conducive to women actually having equitable opportunities and outcomes in the labor market." 

Imprint

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This is an excerpt of the Global Solutions Summit 2021 which brought together more than 180 thought leaders to discuss strategies for the Italian G20 priorities “People, Planet and Prosperity”. It has been compiled by

Markus Engels
Dennis Görlich
Christoph Podewils
Elisabeth Schröder
Rémy Weber

The recordings from all sessions are available on the Global Solutions Initiative’s website.
<https://www.global-solutions-initiative.org/events/summit/summit-2021/>

About the Global Solutions Initiative gGmbH

The Global Solutions Initiative is a global collaborative enterprise comprised of a network of world-renowned think tanks. It proposes policy responses to major global problems, addressed by the G20, the G7 and other global governance fora.

The Global Solutions Initiative was founded during the 2017 German G20 Presidency by the Initiative’s President Dennis J. Snower. The Global Solutions Initiative is a stepping stone to the T20 and G20 Summits and supports the Think20 process for think tanks.

The Global Solutions Initiative is a registered charity under German law. It is primarily funded by major German foundations and public institutions. Funds are mainly used to support independent research serving the G20’s global public interest.

Global Solutions Initiative gGmbH
Rudi-Dutschke-Straße 26
10969 Berlin | Germany
Email: contact@global-solutions-initiative.org
www.global-solutions-initiative.org