



Task Force 7
Towards Reformed Multilateralism: Transforming Global
Institutions and Frameworks



TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CLIMATE MULTILATERALISM: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE G20

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Abstract




The G20 must confront and respond to the challenge of climate change, which impacts the global economy and security. Accounting for around two-thirds of the world's population and contributing around 85 percent of global GDP, the G20 cannot overlook the severity of the climate crisis and its impact on the world economy. The multilateral responses to these issues require embracing varied perspectives: the differential impacts of climate change among and within countries, felt disproportionately

by women and other marginalised groups, and the need for an inclusive transformative climate policy.


India, through its G20 leadership, is well-positioned to push a multilateral agenda for the Global South and champion an inclusive approach to climate multilateralism. By incorporating inclusive policy instruments, India's position in leading regional and global processes can include a wide range of stakeholders, such as underrepresented voices, to inform the multilateral process.



The Challenge



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Climate change has demonstrably substantial effects on global and domestic economic cooperation.¹ As the severity of climate change continues to worsen, the need for effective responses that address its social, economic, and environmental elements become more urgent. Effectively addressing this challenge and the gamut of associated issues requires large-scale multilateral commitments. The endeavour here for an enhanced and inclusive climate cooperation is juxtaposed against a backdrop of ‘waning’ multilateralism.² The disconnect between multilateralism and those it affects is widening. Ideally, global processes should be informed by hyperlocal socioeconomic realities, particularly most impacted from the developing world. At this juncture, India must leverage its G20 presidency to achieve its wider foreign policy objectives by presenting itself as a credible voice of the Global South, most of which is facing crises of food, energy, and water, exacerbated by climate change.

Climate change is posed to be the “greatest market failure” of the world, augmented by other market imperfections.³ In the coming decade,

the ‘failure to mitigate climate change’ and ‘failure to adapt to climate change’ are the greatest risks for humanity and the world economy, followed by other compounding factors such as extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, and large scale involuntary migration.⁴ Economists urge to mainstream nature as “the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.”⁵ Economic decision-making must be driven by the implications of climate change that impede growth, development, and equal opportunity. Through resource mobilisation, an inclusive and transformative climate approach can bridge current inequities and strengthen our resilience to climatic impacts.

As the world’s largest economies and leading producers of greenhouse gases, the G20 bears an imperative responsibility in resolving the looming economic catastrophe exacerbated by climate change. The G20, recognising the link between economic cooperation and climate change, has taken few steps to reduce the implications of climate change. From pushing countries to submit intended nationally determined contributions and ratify the Paris Agreement, promoting green energy capital mobilisation and decarbonisation



(including climate finance), promoting the implementation of carbon pricing mechanisms, encouraging the green energy transition along with the circular carbon economy, and building adaptation resilience a foreground to development, the G20 has successfully fostered global climate action.


The current, preceding, and upcoming G20 presidencies, all held by developing nations, provide an excellent opportunity to anchor the voices of the Global South and facilitate an inclusive climatic and economically secure future for all. India is ranked the third-most vulnerable nation to physical climate risk, and 14 Indian states will be among the world's top 100 most climate-risky regions by 2050.⁶ India's incumbent presidency and climate leadership over the years place it at the centre of charting the path forward in accordance with the principles of equity and inclusivity. In a group dominated by the Global North, the India-led G20 can revitalise climate multilateralism by advancing climate finance and disaster risk resilience for the Global South.

India advocates the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities', emphasising that developed countries that

have traditionally been the largest greenhouse gas emitters have a greater responsibility to reduce emissions and help developing countries adapt to climate change. India is a staunch supporter of equity, voicing concern for those in the Global South who have contributed the least to climate change but bear the most impacts, including a significant economic impact.

A few outstanding examples of India's inclusive and collaborative climate leadership are the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The two mechanisms promote global climate action for developing countries through climate diplomacy, energy access, disaster relief, and resilience by mobilising finance and enabling capacity building.⁷ They recapitulate the key role that India plays in mobilising and institutionalising both developed and emerging countries' efforts on climate. The ISA, an institution built via a joint effort between India and France, reiterates the importance of North-South cooperation for climate change.

In addition, India is setting an example by expanding its climate targets for 2030,⁸ which include generating 500GW of non-fossil energy capacity, 50 percent



renewable energy, cutting emissions by one billion tonnes, lowering the carbon intensity of the economy by 45 percent, and reaching net zero by 2070. Following the historic loss and damage negotiations at COP27 in November 2022,⁹ developing countries need to continually fuel the momentum to hold developed nations responsible for financial support and reparations.


India's stance and emphasis on equity, historical emissions, and climate justice demonstrates its leadership role for developing countries, and it is well-positioned to push for inclusive climate multilateralism during its G20 presidency.

Although climate change is a global concern, its effects on countries, geographies, ecosystems, and people are differentiated and disproportionate. The Global South faces differentiated impacts from climate change, with women and other marginalised groups bearing the brunt of these impacts due to intersectional characteristics, including social and economic responsibilities, food and water security, energy, and healthcare obligations that make these sections more vulnerable.¹⁰ A 20-year study by the Asian Development Bank¹¹ on the gendered nature of natural

disasters shows that in societies where the socioeconomic status of women is low, natural disasters kill more women than men, both directly and indirectly through related post-disaster events.

Climate change-induced loss and damage are both economic and non-economic in nature.¹² The Global South's economy is heavily dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism, which are all vulnerable to climate change. Additionally, there are non-economic loss and damages¹³ that are difficult to quantify in economic terms. The loss of cultural heritage sites, biodiversity, or traditional livelihoods may not have a direct economic value, but they are essential for the well-being of communities and society.

While solutions to address the climate crisis by reducing global emissions and reversing global warming are ongoing, the brunt is felt in the form of disasters. A grim estimate shows that 90 percent of natural disasters and 95 percent of all disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries.¹⁴ The impacts of climate change in the Global South are exacerbated by the fact that they lack the resources and infrastructure to deal with these



challenges, making it difficult to adapt to and recover from climate-related disasters, thereby creating a vicious cycle of climate catastrophe. Further, a significant portion of these countries lack good governance, transparency, accountability and therefore see a high level of corruption. A holistic approach is needed that provides developing and underdeveloped countries avenues to overcome such challenges.

Climate action must address the complexities of impacts, particularly on the most vulnerable groups, with a focus on equity and justice. This means ensuring that the most vulnerable communities and regions have access to resources and support to adapt along with financial and technical


support. It also entails acknowledging indigenous and local groups' traditional knowledge and practices in adaptation efforts and ensuring their participation in decision-making. Gender-blind climate action is guaranteed to fail by default since it disregards the disparate effects of specific policies. Eventually, inclusiveness can result in the establishment of a model or framework within the G20 that induces systemic change, hence fostering growth and sustainable development across different work streams. International economic cooperation, a commitment to climate justice, mainstreaming inclusivity, and equitable burden-sharing between developed and developing countries is required.¹⁵



The G20's Role

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Amid the growing mistrust of the global multilateral system,¹⁶ the G20 can play a vital role in furthering effective climate collaboration. Since the establishment of the G20 during the 2008 global financial crisis, the worldview of inclusivity, equality, and diversity in multilateralism has evolved, as has the idea of a ‘crisis’, which now unambiguously includes climate. With regard to climate change, the G20 can take the lead on an inclusive green transition, accelerated climate financing, and improving disaster resilience and risk reduction, thereby tackling issues that fall under its purview and expertise, and those that are directly related to global economic growth.

This is the opportune moment for India to champion inclusivity across the G20, but specifically for climate multilateralism by continuing to place the Global South’s concerns on the agenda, and incorporating a gendered perspective and including marginalised voices. The G20 must take decisive action to decrease emissions, mobilise climate finance, expedite the transition to a low-carbon economy, strengthen adaptation and resilience, and advance international cooperation on climate

change. Through its climate-related work streams and engagement groups—for instance, the sustainable finance working group, energy transition working group, carbon pricing leadership coalition, and the recently formed environment and climate sustainability working group—the G20 can create and implement climate change and sustainable development policy. Considerations for inclusivity must also be applied as multilateralism, like other international systems, has failed to adequately involve women in decision-making roles.¹⁷

Climate multilateralism, or global cooperation on climate change, is hindered by political disagreements, economic interests, imposition of additional tariffs and non-tariff barriers on goods and services produced by the Global South countries, technology and infrastructure barriers, limited resources, and a lack of trust. Global and multilateral climate action must not only consider the issue of climate financing but respond to the needs of developing countries to revive trust. The energy transition to a low-carbon economy and to the increased usage of renewable energy will require financial commitments by the Global North in




the form of grants, and zero-interest/low-interest loans for the Global South. Reaching net zero requires a US\$100 billion annual commitment at the minimum.¹⁸ Besides looking at climate finance quantitatively (i.e., the quantum of financial flows), it is important to look

at the qualitative aspects of climate finance.¹⁹ These include questioning whether the affected segment of the population is represented in policy planning, and whether projects have a gender equality component and gender-responsive strategies.



Recommendations to the G20

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To overcome the challenges, stronger global cooperation, sustained political will, and substantial investments in clean technology and climate resilience for developing nations are required. To create a climate legacy within the G20, this policy brief proposes that the Indian presidency's actions must be anchored on two pillars: disaster risk resilience, and climate finance.

Disaster risk resilience

India's G20 presidency successfully led the formation of the disaster reduction working group.²⁰ Moreover, the inclusion of CDRI²¹ in the list of international organisations invited to the G20 is also a great step towards including diverse country perspectives.

India can consider embedding a gender lens in disaster risk reduction and resilience. Women suffer greater losses in lives and livelihoods during disasters, as well as lengthier recovery times, because of gender-specific hurdles and inequality.²² In keeping with the Indian G20 presidency's push for women-led development, the role that women leaders play in disaster risk reduction must not be overlooked, where women

can be mobilised as community leaders. It is essential to have gender-responsive disaster relief, and include women's perspectives in the policy planning, implementation, and monitoring stages.

Another issue is the collection of gender-disaggregated data. According to a UN Women report, 62 of the 70 countries surveyed stated that they had not collected proper sex-disaggregated data.²³ India has focused heavily on harnessing the power of 'data for development'.²⁴ Extending this to include data on disasters can have significant beneficial impacts on planning, response, and recovery.

To avoid the duplication of efforts and to streamline the focus on policy action, the G20 can draw on existing frameworks and institutional expertise on gender sensitive disaster risk reduction. The 2012 UN Commission on the Status of Women resolution 56/2,²⁵ highlighted the need to mainstream a gender perspective into all aspects of disaster planning and management. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's Sendai Framework (2015-2030)²⁶ also recognises that women, notably at the grassroots level, play an essential role in attempts to reduce risk.

The G20's endeavour to enhance disaster risk reduction must be a collaborative effort between relevant engagement groups and workstreams. This policy brief proposes that the Think20 (T20), Women20 (W20), and the disaster risk reduction working group converge on this issue. The T20 and W20 (which already interface with each other in various capacities) can act as

valuable resources, while the disaster risk reduction working group can work towards incorporating suggestions within its framework. Additionally, the 'data for development' initiative must make a more proactive push for gender-disaggregated data collection across its verticals, with a focus on disasters.

Policy Gap	Relevant existing frameworks and institutions	Suggested action
1) Absence of women and marginalised communities in DRR policymaking.	1) UNCSW Resolution 56/2, highlighting the need to mainstream a gender perspective into all aspects of disaster programming.	1) Increased interfacing between the T20, W20, and G20 DRR Working Group, with a possible expansion to the Infrastructure Working Group.
2) Lack of comprehensive gender disaggregated data.	2) UNDRR's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.	2) Data for Development to include a focus on gender-disaggregated data in the context of disasters.
3) Limited gender-sensitive responses to disasters.	3) Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure	

Climate finance

Within the G20, the issue of climate financing (particularly concerning renewable energy) is a mainstay in most climate discussions. The narrative must now expand to include both qualitative aspects (such as financing through grants and zero/low interest loans) and quantitative aspects (collaboration and partnerships). This requires reframing

the climate crisis as a transnational and transcultural opportunity to collaborate and cooperate.

India must consider advocating for grants-based climate finance flows to developing and low-income countries, and supporting a gender-just energy transition.



Through the environment and climate sustainability working group²⁷ and the sustainable finance working group,²⁸ the G20 is well positioned to lay out a roadmap for climate finance and chart out a pathway to a just transition. The commitment to climate finance can be cemented with greater private sector participation, which can be mobilised through the Business20 engagement group.²⁹


At a multilateral level, including the ISA³⁰ as a participating organisation further enshrines India's role in voicing the Global South. The ISA eases the role of solar deployment globally, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

At an operational level, climate financing and renewable energy must include

gendered perspectives. Projects will have beneficial³¹ economic and social side-effects that help with long-term viability if gender is considered from the beginning. The intersection of women and energy is often overlooked, with policies often being gender-blind, despite 92 percent of rural domestic energy needs in India being fulfilled by women.³²

The W20 group can play a key role in catalysing the participation of women in renewable energy. It can incorporate some of the learnings and recommendations on gender and women³³ from COP27, and can interface with the development working group, to ensure that the resulting growth and development are holistic and inclusive, with all-of-society benefits.

Policy Gap/Challenge	Existing organisations and initiatives	Suggested action
1) Addition of a gender lens to strengthen energy transition. 2) Harnessing capital from the private sector. 3) Ensuring that capital flows to developing countries in the Global South.	1) International Solar Alliance. 2) Recommendations on a gender-just energy transition from COP 27.	1) Environment and Climate Sustainability + Sustainable Finance working groups to lay down a pathway towards accelerated climate finance; to also feed into the Development Working Group and to the W20 and EMPOWER track. 2) Using the International Solar Alliance as a tool for inclusive climate multilateralism. 3) Mobilising the private sector via the B20.



Existing multilateral systems are large and often difficult to navigate, particularly for underrepresented voices. Positive changes to these systems need not be sweeping reforms and can be brought about by smaller and more focused actions. India's G20 presidency thus presents an opportunity to promote inclusive climate multilateralism and accelerate global cooperation on climate change through better interconnectedness within the

various streams that are not as unwieldy as a larger grouping and often easier to achieve consensus. By prioritising equitable climate action, which includes strengthening grant-based climate finance to promote the transition to renewable energy, and gender inclusive disaster resilience, India can play a key leadership role in addressing the climate crisis in a way that is relevant to the developing world, and in promoting a sustainable future for all.

Attribution: Aditi Mukund and Namrata Kabra, "Towards Inclusive Climate Multilateralism: An Opportunity for the G20," *T20 Policy Brief*, June 2023.

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