



# From Commitments to Implementation:

Lessons from South Africa's 2025 Disability-20 (D20)

**Sikelelwa Alex Msitshana**

Representing the South African D20 Initiative  
COSP19 Side Event · 11 June 2026

# BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Moving Disability Inclusion from the Margins to the Centre

- First G20 Presidency on African soil
- Grounded in the CRPD and African Disability Protocol
- Built on Brazil's 2024 foundations
- Led by persons with disabilities - not merely informed by them

*" Nothing about us without us. "*



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Four pillars of intention framing every stage of the D20 process

1

## RAISE AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

Advocate for formal recognition of the D20 as a G20 engagement group and increase its visibility among G20 stakeholders and the broader public.

2

## GATHER VOICES & INSIGHTS

Collect lived experiences and insights from persons with disabilities and DPO/OPDs across G20 Sherpa working groups, informed by research and evidence.

3

## ENHANCE REPRESENTATION & PARTICIPATION

Strengthen the involvement of persons with disabilities and DPO/OPDs in C20 working groups, with attention to intersectionality: gender, race, youth, and economic inequality.

4

## DEVELOP & DISSEMINATE POLICY OUTPUTS

Produce and advocate for actionable policy outputs to integrate disability inclusion into C20 policy packs and G20 outcomes - measurable and CRPD-aligned.



# PARTICIPATION AT SCALE

April – November 2025 · Persons with Disabilities led from inception to declaration.

**1,718**

Total Participations  
April – October 2025

**12**

Thematic Workstreams  
April – October 2025

**260**

Day 1 D20 Conference  
Participants  
16 November 2025

**220**

Day 2 D20 Conference  
Participants  
17 November 2025

**110**

D20 Conference  
Avg daily virtual  
participants

## THE TWELVE D20 THEMATIC WORKSTREAMS

- |                                             |                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Trade, Finance & Sustainable Development  | ▪ Accessible Tourism               |
| ▪ Democratic Governance & Access to Justice | ▪ Quality Education                |
| ▪ Poverty Alleviation & Food Sustainability | ▪ Employment & Retention           |
| ▪ Women & Gender Equity                     | ▪ Equitable Health for All         |
| ▪ Disaster Risk Reduction                   | ▪ Science, Research & Innovation   |
|                                             | ▪ Digital & Inclusive Economies    |
|                                             | ▪ Just Energy Transition & Climate |

## THE 2025 SA D20 CONFERENCE

The D20 Conference took place on 16–17 November 2025 at the Indaba Hotel, Fourways, Johannesburg, in a hybrid format.

The conference was the formal consolidation and validation of the year-long process and included the symbolic handover of the D20 initiative to the United States as the 2026 G20 host.

# ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS ALL SESSIONS

Ensuring everyone can participate. Every time. Everywhere.

**INCLUSION IS OUR STANDARD. ACCESS IS OUR COMMITMENT.**



## SASL

South African Sign Language interpretation at all sessions



## INTERNATIONAL SIGN

International Sign interpretation for global participants



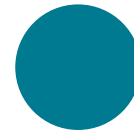
## CART

Real-time captioning (CART) provided throughout



## LIPSPEAKERS

Lip-speaker interpreters at all in-person sessions



## DEAFBLIND SUPPORT

Deafblind interpretation services and trained event staff



## ACCESSIBLE DOCS

Screen reader-compatible digital documents and Braille materials

Accessible information. Accessible communication. Accessible participation. **No one left behind.**

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The values that governed every decision, every engagement, every output

## SELF-REPRESENTATION

Persons with disabilities led, spoke, and shaped all conference and workstream components.

## PAN-AFRICAN SOLIDARITY & GLOBAL SOUTH CO-OPERATION

A regional, southern-led vision for disability rights, centring African OPDs and partners from G20 host countries past and future.

## SAFEGUARDING

A safe, respectful, and inclusive environment was maintained throughout, upholding dignity and promoting mutual accountability.

## FULL ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility was a non-negotiable condition — built into every aspect of the D20 from the first planning meeting to the last session.



Nothing about us without us.  
Nothing for us without us.

**Our principles. Our power. Our future.**

# FIVE PILLARS — SHAPED BY LIVED EXPERIENCE

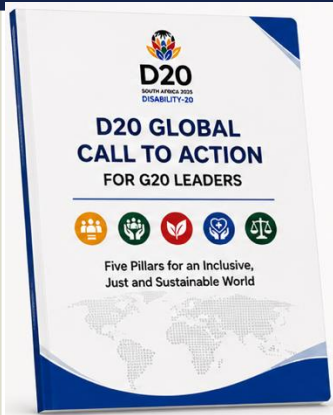
Emerging from cross-thematic analysis across all 12 workstreams

|     |                                  |                                                                                    |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I   | <b>EQUALITY:</b>                 | Inclusive participation across education, employment, and digital transformation.  |
| II  | <b>SOLIDARITY:</b>               | Social protection, care systems, and community resilience.                         |
| III | <b>SUSTAINABILITY:</b>           | Climate justice, energy transition, tourism, and inclusive economies.              |
| IV  | <b>HEALTH &amp; WELL-BEING:</b>  | Inclusive health systems, mental health, rehabilitation, and assistive technology. |
| V   | <b>GOVERNANCE &amp; JUSTICE:</b> | Accessible justice, political participation, and OPD co-governance.                |

These pillars align with the CRPD's core obligations, the SDGs' leave-no-one-behind imperative, and South Africa's MTSF 2024–2029.

# TWO LANDMARK POLICY INSTRUMENTS

From lived experiences to verifiable commitments

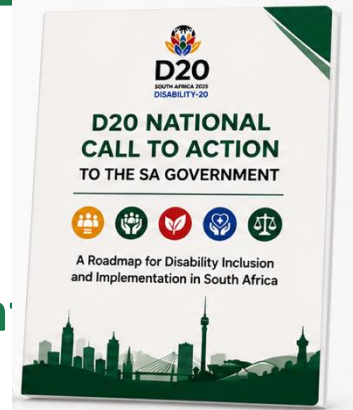


## D20 GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION for G20 Leaders

Directed at all G20 member states. Calls for disability inclusion to become measurable, standalone, and cross-cutting across all G20 pillars — from digital transformation and education to climate resilience and finance.

Grounded in the CRPD, the African Disability Protocol, and the 2030 Agenda. Built on 5 pillars, aligned with SDG and CRPD obligations.

## D20 NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION to the SA Government



A concrete implementation roadmap for South Africa, translating the global D20 declaration into nationally actionable targets through priority actions, departmental references, and financing mechanisms aligned to the MTSF 2024–2029.

Both instruments are grounded in the CRPD, the African Disability Protocol, and the 2030 Agenda - ensuring every call to action has a normative anchor, not only a political aspiration.

# THREE CRITICAL ADVANCES WE ARE CALLING FOR

From the COSP19 platform to the G20 USA 2026 Presidency and beyond

1

## FORMAL D20 RECOGNITION

The US 2026 G20 Presidency must support establishing a G20 Disability Inclusion Working Group — the formal prerequisite for the D20 to become an official G20 Engagement Group. Informal recognition limits authority and sustainability. The D20 has demonstrated viability at scale; now it needs formal G20 architecture.

2

## 15% FOR THE 15%

Ring-fence at least 15% of development, innovation, and climate finance for disability-inclusive initiatives. This builds on the Amman-Berlin Declaration of the 2025 Global Disability Summit and extends that commitment across trade, disaster risk reduction, health, and energy finance.

3

## OPD CO-GOVERNANCE

Move from consultation to co-decision-making. The CRPD requires states to actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organisations in all decision-making. The D20 calls on governments to entrench OPD participation in legislative processes and budget decisions — self-representation is a right.

**RECOGNIZE. INVEST. CO-GOVERN.**

**Let us build a future where inclusion is not an aspiration, it is our shared reality.**



# WHAT SOUTH AFRICA PASSES TO THE D20 COMMUNITY

Five structural lessons for continuity and deepening impact

I

## Structural Inclusion

Informal recognition limits influence. The D20 has demonstrated viability at scale - now it needs formal G20 architecture with standing, resources, and accountability mechanisms.

II

## Accessibility is Foundational, Not Optional

Accessibility must be planned, budgeted, and built in from the outset. Late resourcing undermines participation and legitimacy and contradicts the CRPD's non-negotiable standards.

III

## Multi-Year Continuity is Non-Negotiable

The D20 cannot succeed if recreated from scratch annually. Preparations should begin 12–18 months in advance, with structured handover mechanisms between presidencies.

IV

## Participatory Governance Strengthens Policy

Integrating lived experience, legal frameworks, research, and fiscal analysis produces more coherent and implementable outcomes than expert-only processes.

V

## Global South Leadership Enriches the Platform

Disability discourse must reflect developing-world realities. SA's D20 ensured the platform speaks from, not just about, the Global South and reshaping what 'global inclusion' actually means.

**"Disability inclusion must become structural, measurable, and irreversible within the G20 and beyond."**

**South Africa demonstrated that full and effective participation by persons with disabilities in global policy processes is achievable.**



# Thank You

Full documentation and Call to Action  
available at:

[www.disability20.org.za](http://www.disability20.org.za)