



# C20 Communiqué 2020

# Salvaging the Opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

We can imagine a better future for our people and planet if we seize the current historical moment to reflect, correct, and take decisive global action. Our future is in jeopardy and we as global civil society are deeply concerned. We live in an unprecedented time – not only with a health pandemic and rampant misinformation, but also with the worst economic recession since WWII. Trust in governments, science, and multilateral institutions is in decline. Peace and justice are being undermined. Civic spaces are shrinking. Inequalities are worsening; between the rich and the poor, between genders, and between countries.

The world is not destined to be in turmoil. Inequality, vulnerability, and injustice are not inevitable. Humanity has withstood numerous shared challenges, even in recent history, and the G20 has played a positive role. For example, it mobilized and supported multilateral responses during the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

For humanity to advance, we must choose cooperation over competition. Our leaders must make decisions based on science, solidarity, and public interest instead of lies, profits, and geopolitical considerations.

The Civil 20, as the vehicle for civil society engagement in the G20 process, continues to support the demands of communities and ensure civil society voices are heard by governments. This year, we intensified our efforts to support those from the Global South and grassroots movements to participate in the G20 process. We have ensured the broadest representation to date, with participation from more than 80 countries. Our work is guided by the [C20 Principles](#) of inclusivity, transparency, independence, collaboration, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Currently, civil society is sidelined from global and local decision-making more than at any other time in modern history. The backroom global policy making, aided by private interest and lobbyists, has led to the decline of participatory processes and democratic governance. We continue to remind global leaders to adopt inclusive decision-making, and listen to relevant representatives, especially voices of those who are being left behind. The C20 has proudly produced [10 statements](#) and [11 policy papers](#) to date this year, addressing each G20 stream of work with specific and detailed recommendations. In this communique we provide a reflection on the state of our world, with the following urgent recommendations to G20 leaders: **adopt just policies for an inclusive recovery, restore faith in multilateralism, and attend immediately to the climate and ecological crisis.**

## 1. Just Policies for an Inclusive Recovery:

Our global challenges did not start with COVID-19 and will not end when it is under control. The pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges manifested by the current structural ailments of our political, social and economic systems. Before COVID-19, health systems were already struggling to provide universal coverage. Public health was already underinvested; and COVID-19 has led to deadly secondary impacts by diverting efforts away from existing health crises. The world was already behind in achieving our first sustainable development goal of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, and the prospect of achieving this goal now – given the global recession – is distant. There have been some steps in terms of gender equality, but women have suffered disproportionately as a result of COVID-19, with the responsibilities they have taken on, and the additional discrimination and violence they have faced during the pandemic. Climate action was already slow; but COVID-19 has served for some as an excuse for inaction. Global progress towards accountability in public spending was already weak, but emergency procurement has increased the risks. The global crisis in education was deeply rooted, but now it is expected to worsen with 50% of learners unable to access education opportunities.

To reverse structural inequalities, and recover from this global pandemic, the G20 must commit to a bold global systemic reform and economic recovery, including:

- a. Implementing inclusive global economic and public health policies:** through expanding, extending, and widening participation of creditors for developing countries' debt relief beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. Debt distress needs to be addressed through comprehensive debt cancellation, and reform to the current ad-hoc sovereign debt restructuring mechanism. Additionally, G20 countries must address inequalities of wealth between people and nations by implementing a bold global tax reform through an inclusive decision making process. G20 Leaders must commit to a people's vaccine, making any breakthrough in effective vaccines an immediate global public good. G20 nations should allocate 1% of domestic fiscal stimulus spending to the global response, including by supporting the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.
- b. Upholding accountability & transparency during the COVID-19 response:** through ensuring that all spending related to the COVID response and recovery is open, and adheres to recognized standards of transparency; through guaranteeing that emergency laws and measures passed during COVID-19 are not used to curtail human rights, or to avoid oversight; and that there is sufficient support for all accountability mechanisms that can ensure the probity of fiscal governance.

- c. Pursuing the implementation of global commitments and not using COVID-19 as an excuse for inaction:** by ensuring collective action on climate issues through the Paris Agreement, continuing progress on the SDGs implementation, pursuing gender justice through the implementation of the Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action on Women's Empowerment, realizing commitments made in the Incheon Declaration for Education, and expanding appropriate space for civil society partnership and participation according to the Busan Platform for Effective Development Cooperation.
- d. Bridging the financing gap for the SDG Decade of Action:** through mobilizing \$2.5 trillion USD for developing countries using tools for liquidity injection, debt relief, health systems strengthening, and committing to the agenda of Financing for Development.

## 2. Global Solidarity for Multilateralism:

In the absence of a fair, rules-based international system, and with the erosion of trust in governments and multilateral organizations, humanity risks deepening divisions when unity is necessary, isolation when solidarity is needed, and unhealthy competition when cooperation is vital. Of particular concern is the rise of anti-UN, and anti-multilateralism rhetoric. The G20 and other global efforts should act in support of multilateralism, the UN system, and the implementation of global frameworks. It is the synergetic interplay of global fora – under the umbrella of the UN and international law – that brings strength to our international system and world order. Without global cooperation, decisions of global impact risk being irrelevant and illegitimate. We remind G20 leaders of the purpose of their partnership, which is in part to prevent and respond to global crises. As such, we ask the G20 to commit to restoring trust and effectiveness to multilateral processes by supporting:

- a.** An ambitious UN-centered International Economic Reconstruction and Systemic Reform Summit;
- b.** A universal tax convention and intergovernmental tax commission;
- c.** A UN-led, systematic, comprehensive and enforceable process for sovereign debt restructurings.

We further ask the G20 to consider a number of reforms within its processes to: 1. Increase its legitimacy; 2. Demonstrate accountability; 3. Encourage uptake of its recommendations; and 4. Strengthen multilateralism and a rules-based international order by:

- a. Improving G20 accountability through better target-setting, reporting and greater stakeholder collaboration, including intensifying its exchange with engagement groups, especially by the G20 Finance Track;
- b. Reforming G20 accountability frameworks for both anti-corruption and the SDGs, by making sure that accountability is mainstreamed across all G20 streams of work;
- c. Developing a G20 Gender & Social Inclusion Working Group with an annual ministerial meeting as part of the G20 process;
- d. Elevating the G20 Digital Economy Taskforce into a standing G20 Working Group;
- e. Holding more G20 joint ministerial meetings annually, especially between Finance and Health ministers, and between Education and Digital Economy ministers.

### **3. Urgently Addressing the Climate and Ecological Crisis:**

We expect the G20 to lead on environmental issues, considering that G20 countries are responsible for approximately 80% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and their decisions impact all countries. Our people and planet are suffering dramatically as a result of the lack of climate action. Species continue to become extinct, our lands continue to degrade, global warming is on the rise, and the destruction of tropical rain forests has increased the risk of zoonotic diseases. G20 countries must commit to ambitious concrete commitments on enhancing climate targets, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-term Strategies in-line with the Paris Agreement. G20 Nations must attend to the most vulnerable communities affected by climate change, particularly small island states, who are prone to higher risks to their wellbeing, livelihoods, and culture.

**The Civil 20 remains committed to advocating for the changes that our communities need to create a just world for our people and planet. We ask G20 leaders to lead by example, and commit to engage with civil society, respect the work of NGOs and activists, protect human rights, and respect the rule of law. It is through an active and vibrant global citizenry – in symbiosis with government – that we will be able to build back better and realize the opportunities of the 21st century for all.**

