



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**WELCOMING REMARKS
BY CHAIRPERSON OF THE
G20 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN WORKING GROUP,
ADVOCATE MIKATEKO JOYCE MALULEKE**

27 OCTOBER 2025

G20 Member States,
G20 Guest Countries,
International Organisations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 4th Empowerment of Women Technical Meeting.

It is also my pleasure to welcome you to the warm Johannesburg summer. I hope you will enjoy our Capital Province, Gauteng.

We've come a long way since we first met virtually when South Africa presented its Empowerment of Women Issue Note.

We then met in Sun City, our first in person Technical Meeting. That was indeed a great experience.

We then met again in person in the Kruger National Park, Skukuza, and that was even greater than the Sun City experience.

Distinguished delegates

Now we meet for the last time under the SA presidency here in Johannesburg. And this is planned to be an eventful week. You can now fully say you have experienced almost all of South Africa's seasons.

We are gathered at the 4th Technical Meeting to finalise the negotiations of the Empowerment of Women Ministerial Declaration, with the intent that our Ministers will be able to adopt on 31 October 2025.

If we can reach agreement amongst ourselves, this would indeed be a momentous occasion – for the G20 Forum, to adopt, for the first time, the Empowerment of Women Ministerial Declaration which will translate the hard work, dedication, and compromises reached by all delegations from its conception in India in 2023, to its inaugural execution in Brazil in 2024, to the second year of the EWWG in 2025.

This is critical not only for all women in the G20 countries, but for all women in the Global South and Global North.

We have all been engaging on the three versions of the Ministerial Declaration, through your robust engagements.

We managed to close 29 paragraphs, and now we have 18 outstanding paragraphs to negotiate and close.

I hope you all had the opportunity to reflect on the REV3 of the Ministerial Declaration circulated on 17 October 2025, and you have taken note of the compromises made in order to bridge the gap between delegations.

We rely on all delegations to exercise their maximum flexibility in this last leg of the negotiations.

When the negotiation session resumes, I want us all to reflect, take cognizance that we have spent 55 hours in each other's company engaging in this text over three and a half months.

This has not been an easy process, and we cannot allow all this hard work to turn into nothing.

As Chair of the Working Group, I have expressed that South Africa has tried to accommodate delegations throughout the negotiations process. In this exercise, I wish to enlighten you with the following attempts made by the Chair:

- On the Zero Draft presented by South Africa, **gender** was mentioned 13 times; Rev1 after inputs from all delegations, 28 times; REV2 – 29 times; and now on REV3 - 44 times.

- **Sustainable Development Goals:** Zero Draft – 4 times; REV1 – 5 times; REV2 - 4 times; REV3 – 3 times.
- **Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on the Future:** Zero Draft – 0 times; REV1 – once; REV2 – once; and now on REV3 – deleted.
- **Gender Based Violence:** Zero Draft – 4 times; REV1 – 9 times; REV2 - 8 times; and now on REV3 – 10 times.
- **Intimate Partner Violence, Marital Rape:** Zero Draft – once; REV1 – once; REV2 – once; and now one REV3 – deleted.
- **Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child, early and forced marriage, violence** – Zero Draft – zero; REV1 – zero; REV2 – once; REV3 – deleted.
- **In all their diversity:** Zero Draft – 2 times, REV1 - 3 times, REV2 – 2 times, and now on REV3 – deleted.
- **Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination:** Zero Draft – 1 time; REV1 – 1 time; REV2 - deleted; and now on REV3 – deleted.
- **Comprehensive sexuality education:** Zero Draft – zero; REV1 – once; REV2 – deleted; REV3 – deleted.
- **Patriarchal** – Zero Draft – once; REV1 – 2 times; REV2 – deleted; REV3 – deleted.
- **Marginalised:** Zero Draft – zero times; REV1 – once; REV2 – once; and now REV3 – once.
- **Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive services:** Zero draft – once; REV1 – once; REV2 – once; REV3 – once.
- **Unpaid care** – Zero draft – 5 times; REV1 – 7 times; REV2 – 7 times; and now on REV3 – 7 times.

I also want to remind delegations that the Zero Draft presented by South Africa was 7 pages. However REV3 contains 10 pages. This is an indication that the issues under discussion are vibrant and relevant under the gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls agenda for all delegations.

In these last days of negotiations, I wish to propose and appeal to all delegations that when you propose alternative language, please ensure that the language has previously been negotiated at the United Nations, or it is agreed language.

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to conclude by highlighting that South Africa strongly believes that REV3 of the Ministerial Declaration is balanced, ambitious, action oriented, bold, and all women and girls in our countries will be able to confirm that their human rights are also promoted and protected in the G20.

I wish us all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.