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# AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP AND FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE



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## MINISTER STEENHUISEN CALLS ON DELEGATES AT G20 MEETING TO HELP SHAPE AGRICULTURE



From left KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Premier Thami Ntuli, KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa, Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa, Deputy Mayor Zandile Myeni and Minister John Steenhuisen.

The future of agriculture will not only be shaped by ministries or multilateral agencies. It will be shaped by people on farms, in cooperatives, in laboratories and in households, and those who make decisions every day based on the systems we help shape here. This was mentioned by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen during the official opening of the Second Group Twenty (G20) Agriculture Working Group (AWGM) and Food Security Task Force Meeting held at Southern Sun Elangeni from 23 to 24 April 2025.

This gathering marked a historic milestone as the AWGM delegates met on African soil for the first time. These two-day meetings with G20 member states are part of a series of meetings that South Africa will host during its year-long presidency.

The G20 is an international forum comprising many of the world's largest developing and developed economies, established to tackle pressing global economic and financial issues.

The AWGM and Food Security Task Force Meeting was held under the themes: "Data-Driven Approaches to Addressing Food Security" and "Promoting Inclusive Agricultural Investment and Market Access". The focus was on four key priorities: Promotion of policies and investments that drive inclusive market participation towards improved food and nutrition security; Empowering youth and women in agrifood systems; Fostering innovation and technology transfer in agriculture and agro-processing and Building climate resilience for sustainable agricultural production.

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“ I have no doubt that this gathering serves as the building blocks of climate resilience for sustainable agricultural production and foster innovation and technology transfer in agriculture and agro-processing, ”

South Africa has assumed its rightful place on the world stage, committed to playing a constructive role on the continent and around the globe for the realisation of a better Africa and a better world. The Department of Agriculture hosted a successful first G20 AWGM Meeting virtually at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation on 3 March 2025.

Steenhuisen said he hopes this year’s G20 will urgently address threats to the agricultural industry amid concerns about pressures on the world food systems. “Rising input costs, unpredictable climate shocks and constrained fiscal space are among pressing issues that need to be addressed to reduce the impact on small-scale producers and rural communities. If the G20 is to be a platform of leadership, then this working group must be a space of listening. Of designing policies with, not just for, the people most affected. Of bringing real accountability into the promises we make,” said the minister.

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thami Ntuli mentioned that the G20 Agriculture Working Group will resolve the central contradiction of food being available in abundance in one part of the world and being scarce in the other. “I have no doubt that this gathering serves as the building blocks of climate resilience for sustainable agricultural production and foster innovation and technology transfer in agriculture and agro-processing,” he said.



Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa giving closing remarks of the G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting in Durban.



A delegate from Brazil representing his country during the G20 meetings in Durban.



From left KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development HOD Zibusiso Dlamini DOA Minister John Steenhuisen and Director-General Mooketsa Ramasodi at the G20 meetings in Durban.

## G20 MEMBERS TO PRIORITISE EMPOWERING YOUTH AND WOMEN IN AGRIFOODS SYSTEM



Delegates from various countries during the G20 meetings in Durban.

Samuel Kgatla

**G**20 members came together on 23 April 2025 at Elangeni Hotel in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, to share ideas on how to prioritise and empower women and youth in agrifoods systems. Empowering youth and women in agrifood systems was one of the key priorities of the G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting. Agrifood systems are a major employer of women globally and constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries. The session was supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the second-largest multi-financier in the agricultural sector.

As the global population continues to grow, there is an urgent need for innovative solutions to enhance productivity, sustainability and resilience in food systems. With less than six years to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), effort must be accelerated in all aspects. The agrifood sector is facing immense challenges related to food security, environmental sustainability and economic viability. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the biggest challenges preventing rural youth to succeed are limited access to land and resources; lack of formal education and training; uneven access to markets and value chains; threats from changing weather patterns; environmental degradation; negative social and cultural perceptions; transport and infrastructure; poor digital and technological access and weak institutional support.

According to IFAD, there are 1,8 billion youths aged 10 to 24 who are estimated to reach 1,9 billion by 2030, and close to 90% of them live in developing countries and more than 50% in rural areas. Globally, 36% of working women are employed in agrifood systems, while in low- and middle-income countries, they are responsible for 80% of total food production. Women make up

43% of rural people working in agriculture, but they account for less than 13% of agricultural landholders in the world. Agrifood systems are a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries.

Senior Partnership Officer at IFAD, Ms Maija Peltola said more must be done to empower women in agrifood systems. “We need to support behavioural change at the household level; this means also balancing care work more evenly, skills training in communities and changing policies. While 75% of policy documents relating to agriculture and rural development from 68 countries recognise women’s roles and/or women’s challenges in agriculture and rural development, only 19% included policy goals related to gender. We need to tackle root causes so that women can participate in, benefit from, and be empowered by policies and programmes,” she said.

G20 countries are encouraged to create mechanisms for youth participation in agri-food policy making, including multi-stakeholder platforms and capacity building. Youth should act as policy-shapers, and not only be “beneficiaries”. G20 members and international organisations pledged to support and prioritise empowering youth and women in agrifood systems. Furthermore, they are going to strengthen young people and women’s opportunities to inspire them to become leaders to drive change within their communities.

Director-General of Department of Agriculture, Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, thanked the G20 members for their interventions on empowering youth and women. He urged members to support programmes to help young people and women in the agriculture sector.

## AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP VISITS ONE OF THE SA'S LEADING AGRO LOGISTICS HUBS

Samuel Kgatla



*Cucumber is one of the crops grown at Dube Trade Port AgriZone in Durban.*

and international markets and cucumbers are the main income generator. These glasshouses are equipped with many advanced features, such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels, water purification facilities and computerised climate control. They also do water recycling which helps limit the farm's impact on the environment. Production at the AgriZone started in April 2011. Dube Trade Port AgriZone employs 206 people as of 2023. This number includes employees at the trade port itself, which is the entity overseeing the Special Economic Zone, as well as those working within the AgriZone.

Mr Thabani Mkhize from KZN DARD, and a member of the G20 AWGM organising team, said the provincial government was proud to host the international delegates at Dube Trade Port AgriZone. "We are pleased to host the G20 delegates and Dube Trade Port AgriZone is a purpose-built, specially economic zone owned by the DARD. It is really designed to assist farmers with agricultural production that is export orientated, but there are also other activities happening within the AgriZone," he said.

Mr Ruben Monteiro from Portugal said the visit to the trade port has enlightened him on South African agriculture. He mentioned that South Africa is a beautiful country with lots of agricultural activities, and he will always cherish the moments he has experienced in the country.



*G20 delegates enjoyed their visit to the Dube Trade Port AgriZone near King Shaka Airport.*

**T**he G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting (AWGM) delegates visited the Dube Trade Port AgriZone in Durban on 24 April 2025, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). This visit was part of the lined up activities for the AWGM held at Elangeni from 23 to 25 April 2025. Located at the King Shaka International Airport, the Dube Trade Port AgriZone is owned by the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in KZN. The South African government saw it fit for the AWGM delegates to visit this big agricultural site as one of the country's leading agrologistics hubs.

Dube Trade Port AgriZone is a Special Economic Zone which specialises in the propagation, cultivation and processing of high-value agricultural and horticultural crops. The facility plays a crucial role in supporting agricultural exports, advancing technology-driven production and improving market access. Furthermore, it provides fully serviced industrial precincts and offers private-sector investors the opportunity to access African markets efficiently. The visit highlighted South Africa's commitment to modernising food systems and strengthening resilient agricultural value chains.

The facility has a packhouse and 12 Dutch-built glasshouses of 1 ha each. In total, 4 ha each of tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers (red and yellow) are grown. They are supplying local

## FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE TACKLES FACTORS THAT IMPACT FOOD ACCESSIBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

Rony Moremi



Director-General of the Department of Agriculture Mooketsa Ramasodi at the G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting in Durban.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” said the Acting Director-General of the Department of Agriculture, Mooketsa Ramasodi, during his opening remarks at the Food Security Task Force Meeting on 25 April 2025 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

The director-general was acknowledging that, as part of the G20 countries, South Africa will be able to tackle food security issues by working in partnership with other G20 countries. The G20 represents approximately 75% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 85% of the world trade. According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2024), about 733 million people may have faced hunger in 2023, which is equivalent to one in eleven people globally and one in five in Africa.

This is why Food security is high on the agenda of South Africa's G20 Presidency through the establishment of the Food Security Task Force. The task force will look at macroeconomic factors that impact food accessibility and affordability, building on the Global Alliance Against Hunger, which was launched by Brazil during its G20 Presidency. The task force will be supported by key reports from international organisations and experts to guide deliberations.

The first study will explore the food security policy instruments and agrifood systems approaches that are most effective, sustainable and climate resilient at national, regional and global levels. The objective of the study is to explore a range of policy instruments and agrifood system approaches aimed at improving the effectiveness, sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems. The second study will explore the feasibility of various commodity price stabilisation techniques at regional and global levels. The third study will analyse the global macroeconomic factors and key drivers impacting global commodity price volatility, domestic food prices, affordability and accessibility to food.

During final deliberations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) flagged persistent food price volatility, for example, the 2022 to 2023 peak inflation of 14,5% that was driven by economic, climatic and conflict impacts. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) indicated that they are assessing direct and indirect methods for commodity price stabilisation, including strategic reserves and financial frameworks. The FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are advancing a food systems transformation study focusing on sustainable production, environmental protection and inclusivity.

The meeting provided valuable inputs on shaping the future for domestic, regional and global food systems. Based on the deliberations of the meeting, Brazil and France said that South Africa's plan is an ambitious plan, while Germany said that there is a lot to take into consideration given that food security is a multidisciplinary approach. Major G20 countries, such as Brazil, advocated market equity and integration with global alliance initiatives.

The African Union called for African ownership, regional reserves and blended finance and addressed that Africa should be a “partner, not a beneficiary”. Argentina and Australia both supported focussing on food security, however, cautioned against price controls that distort markets. The meeting concluded that inputs from members will be consolidated into the study proposals and finalisation of study reports and deliverables should be completed by July 2025.

## BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



CEO of the Agricultural Research Council, Litha Maginxa, DDG Kwena Komape and Director-General Mooketsa Ramasodi from the Department of Agriculture during the G20 meeting in Durban.



Delegates who represented their countries during the Agriculture Working Group Meeting in Durban.

Innocent Mhlanga

These meetings were held under the themes: “Data-Driven Approaches to Addressing Food Security” and “Promoting Inclusive Agricultural Investment and Market Access”, with the focus being on key priorities such as “Building climate resilience for sustainable agricultural production”.

Four priorities were discussed during the Agriculture Working Group meeting, and the topic on building climate resilience for sustainable production was one of the key priorities. Representing the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa, Dr Mahlako Makgahlela presented research on harnessing genetic diversity and traditional genotypes for climate-resilient livestock production, which she says describes the disruptions on agriculture such as drought, heatwaves, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem function, among others.

She said that they have also innovated strategies and technologies for climate resilience because genetic diversity is a critical factor to build resilience, more so in livestock, selective breeding, crossbreeding and the use of traditional genotypes. The discovery of major genes associated with traits that enhance resilience also develop gene tests for marker assisted selection.

The Brazilian delegation said that they have initiated the harvest guarantee since 2002 to offer financial protection to the most vulnerable household farmers facing significant crop losses

owing to extreme climate events such as droughts and floods. Its target is the low-income farmers who cultivate on 0,6 to 5 hectares with beans, maize, rice fallow cotton or cassava.

After 17 agricultural seasons, Brazil says that the results and takeaways are approximately 1,2 million to 7,6 million family farming households benefit; it prevents rural migration and allows continuity in farming activities; and enhances community resilience to climate shocks. The Russian Federation monitoring system of agroclimatic resource and crop productivity estimation indicates a decrease in the climate-based yields of spring wheat in the main grain production regions in the south of the European part of Russia, which accounts for about 50% of grain and legume production.

Climate-soil-yields help farmers adapt to climate change at the local and individual farms level and allows farmers to manage climate risks. Climate-soil-yields provide a scientific assessment of the climatic resources for various areas in the Russian region.

Russia suggested that several indicators can be developed for each region to monitor and evaluate the efficiency of adaptation measures implementation.

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Zibusiso Dlamini, Head of Department for KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development participating in the discussions at the G20 Agriculture Working Group meeting in Durban.



A delegate from India sharing his country's views during the G20 meetings in Durban.



Delegates from G20 member countries participating in discussions during the G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting.