

The Farmers' Chronicles

BLOG

25 September 2025



Planting Seeds of Unity: South Africa's Historic Role in G20 Food Security and Agriculture

In a season where droughts bite into yields and smallholders struggle for market access, South Africa took its voice global. From 14 to 19 September 2025, Cape Town and Somerset West became the stage for a historic milestone: under its G20 Presidency, South Africa led the world in shaping the future of food security and agriculture. At a time when nearly 800 million people worldwide go hungry daily, many of them across Africa, South Africa demonstrated that the Global South is not only carrying burdens but also offering solutions. And it does so rooted in Ubuntu: "I am because we are".

Two venues carried the weight of history as South Africa hosted the G20 agriculture and food security meetings. The Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) served as the stage for the Food Security Task Force Meeting, while the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West hosted the Agriculture Working Group and ministerial meetings. The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, joined by Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa, attended the ministerial meetings at the Lord Charles Hotel on 18 and 19 September, steering high-stakes conversations with determination.

For once, Africa was not only being spoken about, but it was speaking for itself, and for farmers everywhere. Guided by the G20 theme: Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability, discussions focused on two urgent priorities, namely using data-driven solutions to fight hunger and malnutrition, and championing inclusive investment to ensure that farmers, especially smallholders, are not left behind. Minister Steenhuisen put it plainly: resilience must become the global norm, not the exception, if food systems are to withstand climate shocks and economic turbulence.

Behind the diplomatic handshakes were human lives at stake. Millions of families across Africa, particularly in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, wrestle daily with food insecurity. The agenda did not shy away from this reality. It called for climate-smart farming practices to grow more with less while protecting the land and for empowering smallholders, often youth and women, to drive vibrant rural economies. It emphasised reducing post-harvest losses through better roads, storage and innovation, diversifying crops to provide nutrition rather than just calories, and expanding social protection



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programmes to ensure that vulnerable communities do not fall through the cracks. This was not abstract policy; it was about restoring dignity by putting nutritious food on tables. Two major commitments emerged from the meetings that will shape global food security for years to come. The Agriculture Working Group Chairman's Report captured progress and outlined a roadmap for future G20 agricultural policy, while the Food Security Task Force Ministerial Declaration represented a united pledge to tackle hunger through climate-responsive solutions.

At the heart of the declaration were the Ubuntu High-Level Principles, South Africa's contribution emphasising fairness, equity and shared responsibility in global food security.

The momentum extended beyond these formal commitments. African nations, Brazil and private sector partners deepened collaboration through the B20 platform, working together on initiatives such as climate risk insurance, renewable rural energy, digital trade facilitation and skills development, all designed to directly benefit farmers and rural communities.

On 18 September 2025, a historic moment unfolded at the Lord Charles Hotel as Minister Steenhuisen formally handed over the presidency of the G20 Agriculture Working Group to the United States of America (USA). This symbolic transition underscored a vital truth: leadership may change, but the mission persists. South Africa's priorities, i.e., empowering youth and women, fostering innovation, promoting inclusive markets, and building climate resilience, now serve as the foundation for the next chapter under USA stewardship.

For farmers in South Africa and beyond, this was more than high-level diplomacy. It was recognition that the future of food security depends on investing in smallholder resilience, ensuring climate adaptation reaches the fields, and opening markets that value fairness as much as profit. South Africa proved that the Global South is not just a recipient of aid, but a driver of global solutions. Hosting these G20 agriculture and food security forums was a milestone not only of diplomacy, but of vision. South Africa showed that hunger is not inevitable and that solutions must be built on solidarity.

As the seeds of unity planted in Cape Town and Somerset West take root, the challenge is clear: will these global commitments reach the farms, families and fields that need them most? One thing is certain, South Africa's voice has left its mark, proving that farmers everywhere are central to the fight against hunger.

-Prince Mtsweni-

