

POLICY SOLUTION

THE G20 IN 2026– 2028: THE END OF THE AGENDA 2030?

A PROPOSAL FOR A UNIVERSAL TRACK
1.5 SPACE ON POST-2030
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



An informal engagement
of global think tanks

**Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, Rafaela Guedes, Shuva Raha,
Richard Ponzio, Saha Sabyasachi, Mikatekiso Kubayi,
Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Maria João Rodrigues, Maria
Elena Agüero, Izabella Teixeira, Christian Kastrop,
Vidisha Mishra, Tetsushi Sonobe, Igor Makarov, Xiuli Xu,
Rainer Kern, Vusal Gasimli, Güven Sak, Sait Akman,
Juha Leppanen**

**ADVISORY
COUNCIL**

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Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, Rafaela Guedes, Shuva Raha, Richard Ponzio, Saha Sabyasachi, Mikatekiso Kubayi, Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Maria Elena Aguero, Izabella Teixeira, Christian Kastrop, Vidisha Mishra, Tetsushi Sonobe, Igor Makarov, Xiuli Xu, Rainer Kern, Vusal Gasimli, Güven Sak, Sait Akman, Juha Leppanen

1. The challenges, threats and opportunities: shifting dynamics

1.1 Why Now: A generational shift

The G20 US presidency marks a rupture in nearly two decades of G20–UN convergence on development. However, the Agenda 2030 will not end in Miami—efforts are underway to reform it.¹ The window runs from 2026 to the South Korean G20 presidency in 2028, with the SDGs Leaders’ Summit in 2027.

The delivery crisis of the Agenda 2030 is real, but the G20 Global South presidencies 2022–2025 enacted a historic enlargement of track 1.5 diplomacy.² The same period has produced an unprecedented density of governmental and non-governmental work on the future of development cooperation.³ Therefore, the question is whether a post-2030 framework will emerge by design or by default.

The institutional landscape is shifting. Public support for international cooperation has become

¹ The Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth and the Seoul Development Action Plan were adopted at the G20 South Korea in 2010, the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda adopted under China’s presidency in 2016 and the Varanasi principles to support the SDGs agenda were adopted under India’s in 2023.

² Buchoud, N.J.A. and Sonobe, T., 2024, “Roles of Think Tanks in a New Transactional World: New Horizons from the Amazon to the Himalayas,” CEBRI, December 2024, <https://cebri.org/revista/en/artigo/186/roles-of-think-tanks-in-a-new-transactional-world> and Buchoud, N.J.A. and Sonobe, T., 2023. “Think Tanks: Solutions-Brokers in a New Multipolar Order?” CEBRI, December 2023, <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/123/think-tanks-solutions-brokers-in-a-new-multipolar-order>

³ Among others: the Sevilla Compromise (2025); the Ubuntu Commission; the Commission for the Future of Development Cooperation; Germany’s South-North Commission and the IDOS consultations; the Sustainable Development Solutions Network consultations; the Global Governance Innovation Network; the Astana Group on the future of sustainable development; the reform consultations of the OECD Development Assistance Committee; India’s Nalanda Development Dialogues; the GSI–GIZ Dialogues on the Future of Development Cooperation; the UCL-coordinated New Alignment ahead of the UK (2027) and South Korea (2028) presidencies; and a rising set of faith-based and philanthropic tracks, from the Religion20 summit and the IsDB’s 2026 Baku plenary on financing sustainable development beyond traditional ODA to the Commission on Asian Philanthropy and the Rockefeller Foundation–ADB research on climate and sustainable finance.

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more tenuous in recent years.⁴ Polling and votes show that poverty, inequality, food and water security, and jobs remain widely shared priorities, but cooperation is increasingly judged by whether it delivers domestically. A credible post-2030 process must demonstrate a new balance between national priorities, universal ambitions, and global goods.

1.2 The institutional state of play: South-North reversing dynamics

The G7 and the EU language increasingly emphasize competitiveness and mutually beneficial partnerships, while references to Agenda 2030 have weakened.⁵ At the same time, military spending is on the rise and development cooperation is under pressure to justify itself in strategic terms—although evidence is mounting that a rapid decline in ODA could quickly prove detrimental.⁶ Climate politics—from energy security and sovereignty, mining and critical minerals, to bioeconomy and future digital systems—increasingly takes place outside existing multilateral formats such as COPs.⁷

This shift is not uniform. BRICS leaders explicitly align Global South cooperation with the Agenda 2030.⁸ China, India, Indonesia, and ASEAN connect mid-century growth trajectories with sustainable development, with Asia as the home of a revival of foresight. The G20 UK itself could be an opportunity to renew international cooperation, following calls reiterated by many governments and organisations on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in 2026.⁹

⁴ Rockefeller Foundation, September 2025. Build the Shared Future initiative. Demanding Results: Global Views on International Cooperation.

<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Demanding-Results-Global-Views-on-International-Cooperation-Report-Final.pdf> and Plackett, B., 2024. “What the science of elections can reveal in this super-election year,” *Nature*, June 10, 2024. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-01712-2>

⁵ G7 France, 2026. G7 Leaders’ Declaration on Mutually Beneficial International Partnerships, June 17, 2026. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/presse-et-ressources/decouvrir-et-informer/actualites/declaration-des-chefs-d-etat-et-de-gouvernement-du-g7-sur-des-partenariats-internationaux> See also Global Partnerships Conference 2026, United Kingdom. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/global-partnerships-conference-2026>

⁶ Military spending approached USD 3 trillion in 2025 and could more than double by 2035. Sources: SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2026; and United Nations, 2025, *The True Cost of Peace: Rebalancing World Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future*.

<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2026/global-military-spending-rise-continues-european-and-asian-expenditures-surge> ; <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/the-true-cost-of-peace> ODA saw a historic decline in 2025–26 according to the OECD, and new research at the intersection of health and development quantifies the potentially very high human cost of a continued retreat from cooperation see also Da Silva, A. F., Rezende Anderle, R. V., Sibilis, G. B., et al., 2026. “Impact of two decades of humanitarian and development assistance and the projected mortality consequences of current defunding to 2030,” *The Lancet Global Health*, May 2026.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(26\)00008-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(26)00008-2/fulltext)

⁷ Carpentier-Tanguy, X., 2026, *Le Monde*, August 1, 2026; and Guedes, R., 2026, CEBRI–IBRAM Roundtable with Pablo Cesário on “Mineral sovereignty in times of geopolitical competition.”

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7486397365008896001/>

⁸ BRICS 2025 Leaders’ Declaration. Rio de Janeiro Declaration – Strengthening Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance, July 6, 2025. https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents?dtl/39770/Rio_de_Janeiro_Declaration_Strengthening_Global_South_Cooperation_for_a_More_Inclusive_and_Sustainable_Governance BRICS 2026 in India showcases an agenda for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability, <https://www.brics2026.gov.in/>

⁹ Around 100 Former Heads of State and Government Call on Current Leaders To Renew International Cooperation, New York, 21.9.2026

2. Proposal. A light model with proven precedents

2.1 Principles of a universal Track 1.5 space for development cooperation

This year and for the first time since the G20 became a leaders' summit, a presidency has endorsed no engagement group except business (B20), precisely at the moment when non-governmental and plurilateral activity on the future of cooperation is at its historical peak—including the localisation of the SDGs.¹⁰ The supply of ideas has never been larger, but the space where governments and societies can jointly process them has never been smaller and yet more dispersed.

Without a structured space to aggregate ideas, post-2030 planning risks becoming narrow, reactive, and geopolitically segmented. Years of cooperation between T20 and the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) can serve as a starting point, supplemented by enduring exchanges among engagement groups.

Two design risks should be avoided. First, a short-sighted consensus among like-minded governments should not drive future talks. Second, discussions should not spread across too many issues without sufficient focus to influence political decisions. The Track 1.5 space should therefore be open, plural, technically grounded, and focused on a limited set of deliverables echoing shared priorities across the G20 and the UN. Other guiding principles should include aggregating existing institutional mechanisms and avoiding new modalities, as well as interconnecting policymaking and scientific cooperation.

2.2 Proposal

A post-2030 process does not require a new institution. Convincing precedents from the Cold War era show the value of light, science-based, cross-boundary platforms to build true problem-solving cooperation outside formal bureaucracies.¹¹ A light, time-bound Track 1.5 platform can organize fragmented ideas, bridge political divides, and prepare options, including

<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/100-former-heads-state-government-current-leaders-renew-international-cooperation/>

¹⁰ Buchoud, N.J.A., Kern, R., with Kundu, D., and Sabyasashi, S., 2026. The New Role of Cities in the G7 and Major Macroeconomic Fora to Bridge Sustainable and Climate Finance Gaps, Urban 7 France, Think 7 France, IDDRI, July 2026.

<https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Hors%20catalogue%20Iddri/T7%20U7%20strategic%20note%20on%20cities%20and%20think%20tanks%20in%20the%20G7.pdf>

¹¹ The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) was created in the early 1970s as a joint US–USSR initiative to address large-scale global problems across Cold War divides. Following the same pattern, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) became the world's largest global public research partnership for food security — decades before the Millennium Development Goals. The Independent Commission on International Development Issues, or 'Brandt Commission' was installed in 1977 across West-East and non-alignment spheres and has become a landmark for international development cooperation, echoed in July 2026 by the creation of the new international South North Commission in Germany, chaired by the former chancellor O. Scholz.

for a first biennial G20–UN summit in 2027, where China will chair BRICS after India’s chairship in 2026.

What. We propose establishing the universal Post-2030 Track 1.5 Platform as a light, temporary space for structured dialogue between governments, think tanks, and other groups researching the successor architecture to the Agenda 2030 and common development goals. This is not a new administrative body duplicating existing consultative space such as ECOSOC. It stands at the junction of UN and G20 work, where no such space currently exists.¹²

Who and how. The platform would be co-facilitated by the T20 in cooperation with others, with 1) a steering group pairing the rotating T20 chairs (current T20 troika 2026-2028) with the UN Secretary-General and G20 high-level and independent expert groups (e.g., GSDR, MDB reform, Beyond GDP, AI, and poverty), 2) participation across geopolitical divides ensured as a founding principle, not an aspiration, 3) a voluntary secretariat hosted by an existing network rather than a new body, possibly based on the activities and outcomes of the T20 community through to 2028.

When. A mandate running from the conclusion of the G20 US summit in Miami (2026) through the South Korean G20 presidency (2028), with sunset review built in—the platform ends or is institutionalized by decision, not by inertia.

Linkages. The platform would build on the outcomes of the G20 US, function in close connection with the G20 UK and South Korean presidencies, take stock of similar work within BRICS on future scenarios, and feed directly into the biennial G20–UN summit format proposed in 2024 by the Brazilian and South African presidencies ahead of the Summit of the Future.

Outputs. In 2027, the platform should deliver: (i) *A Post-2030 Options Paper by 2027*, (ii) a *State of Development Cooperation Dialogue by 2028*, and (iii) a *Design Brief for mid-century development goals by 2028* connecting national planning trajectories and global objectives.

Conclusion: An Address to the UN Secretary-General

The incoming Secretary-General should use the 2026–2028 G20 cycle to prevent post-2030 cooperation from being defined by drift. A light Track 1.5 platform would not renegotiate the SDGs; it would prepare politically usable options, help consolidate fragmented initiatives, and keep universal development cooperation open across geopolitical divides.

¹² Existing networks such as the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), which held its annual convening in Lisbon in July 2026, could help play a convening role.

