Towards Equitable and Inclusive Digital Futures

Reflections from the Think20 Task Force on Digital Transformation

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CONSOLIDATE AND SUSTAIN

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This document, collaboratively written by Think20 (T20) task force members (see last page for list of contributors), complements the official T20 communiqué and recommendations. While the T20 communiqué directly focuses on actionable recommendations for the South African G20 Digital Economy Working Group and Task Force on AI, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development, this document is both broader, capturing wider debates, priorities and contexts around global digital transformation, and specific to the T20 Task Force 2 on Digital Transformation. It reflects the wide areas of expertise, research, ideas and experiences represented by the task force, providing a lens on the complexity of the issues and the diversity behind the consensus of the communiqué.

Section 1. Introduction and purpose

Africa's first G20 presidency, in South Africa, offers an opportunity to advance a transformative digital agenda that enhances public and local value creation, redresses the uneven distribution of digital opportunities and accelerates progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The T20 provides a space for think tanks to inform, engage and link G20 discussions to research and knowledge beyond the G20 countries. Furthering the foundational work of Brazil's T20 presidency, which emphasised the need for a human-centred digital economy grounded in rights and international cooperation, the South African T20 Task Force on Digital Transformation aimed to address the urgent question of how we can use aspects of digital and data ecosystems to transform economies and redress digital inequality while building a shared vision of equitable, inclusive, just and sustainable development.

Reflecting the South African G20 presidency's digital transformation agenda, the task force organised its discussions and engagements around three core thematic areas:

- Equitable digital inclusion – in particular, the multiple and complex challenges to its realisation, which span both supply-side infrastructural challenges and demand-side constraints, including affordability, digital literacy and linguistic barriers.
- Transformational digital public infrastructure (DPI): Building on its introduction/clarification as a global policy issue during India's G20 presidency, the task force considered how DPI is being extended to diverse country contexts, sectors and areas of technology. It also looked at the potential for DPI systems to exacerbate economic, political and social

inequalities if insufficient policy attention is given to wider infrastructural, political, economic and social inequalities and particularities.

- Regulation of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), digital currencies and quantum computing, and, again, considering the uneven and unequal global realities around their investment, development and use, in the context of the whole production value chain, from exploitative labour practices in mineral and data extraction to the overwhelming energy demands of AI.

This note synthesises the insights raised through the task force over the course of the South African G20 presidency. It first reflects on the geopolitical context in which the G20 and the task force's discussions take place and then, within this wider context, reflects on priorities and issues that emerged as critical to the wider agenda of equitable and inclusive digital transformation.

The intended audience for this note includes future T20s and G20s, to support continuity and cumulative policy discussions, as well as other bodies – civil society, national and multilateral – with complementary aims and priorities around digital transformation. It is intended to bolster a global knowledge base and community that supports international policy discussions within and beyond the G20.

Section 2. The wider geopolitical context

The South African G20 presidency, and by extension the T20 process, comes at a decisive moment for Africa and the world. Africa is a frontier of digital growth as well as a testing ground technological innovation. Although there is considerable organic and indigenous innovation on the continent, much of this activity happens through commercial firms, unconstrained by academic ethical considerations or, often, national and regional regulation. This results in profoundly unequal impacts on different communities. Ensuring enhanced, data-driven technologies enable more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development requires recognition of African states' sovereignty as well as regulation that supports access to the means of innovation by Africans. Bringing Africa's experiences to the global stage not only shapes more public interest governance frameworks aimed at mitigating systemic risk but also promotes a development-oriented agenda that views digital transformation as a driver of social and economic justice for all, particularly those in the Global South.

This is done through the development of national and regional integrated data governance frameworks that are rights-preserving, participatory, humane and cognisant of ecological justice.

The geopolitical environment is increasingly volatile, with diverging national interests, rapid technological change and heightened competition over data, digital infrastructure, emerging technologies and exclusion. Further, the current international economic and financial system is stacked against the digital futures of developing countries. This moment is defined by unprecedented complexity in global decision-making.

At the same time, the governance of digital transformation is being addressed in numerous (and sometimes overlapping) multilateral and multistakeholder processes, from the UN's Global Digital Compact to the WSIS+20 review and G7 and G20 negotiations. Alternative multilateral formations such as BRICS and a growing number of regional digital frameworks can advance, complement but also fracture global governance frameworks. The AU Data Policy Framework, endorsed by member states in 2022, includes agreements on principles of data justice and public value creation that other multilateral organisations have not been able to forge among their member states.

Additional specialised multilateral initiatives, such as the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, which gathered experts with mandates beyond the strictures of member states, have sought to challenge dominant paradigms and respond to dynamic technological evolution through policy and regulatory innovation. These efforts largely relied on Western and Northern experts with limited Global South, and particularly African, participation. However, still, in building on the progressive epistemic foundation found in some of the institutions involved, especially some European actors, the ground was laid for broader conceptions of data justice. These took root in the global governance processes such as the Global Digital Compact and the Brazilian G20 and T20, bringing the notion of justice into the data life cycle and its effect on people. In this regard, promoting data governance that is just, equitable and rights-promoting is fundamental to advancing a globalised strategy that unifies social justice with digital transformation. This approach is also aligned with the original vision of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), that established a people-centred approach to technology and society, with governments forming part of multistakeholder governance. At the time of writing, the renewal of WSIS was being negotiated at the UN.

While these processes offer valuable platforms, they also create a fragmented governance landscape. Such fragmentation poses a critical risk to realising and promoting more just, equitable and rights-promoting digital transformations, mirroring rather than mitigating the risks of a geopolitical climate marked by commercial and national interests and divisions. Given its emphasis on consensus and engagement across countries and sectors, the G20 (and T20) can play a crucial bridging role, fostering coherence, promoting dialogue among diverse stakeholders and anchoring discussions in principles of inclusivity, transparency and shared

benefit. Four years of Global South presidencies have indicated the potential for the G20 to be a space for a more inclusive global forum around issues of digital transformation.

Therefore, global progress on regulation and support for digital transformation is marked by a clear tension. On the one side is the opportunity presented by the Global South G20 presidencies and wider prioritisation of global governance in various multilateral spaces. On the other side are the existing inequalities and political and economic developments that are exacerbating exclusion and inequality.

Section 3. Reflections on issues facing global governance and inclusive digital transformation from the task force

Within this broader climate, the task force agreed on three core recommendations emerging from its commissioned policy briefs, blogs and events (presented and discussed in full in the task force statement and T20 communiqué):

- drive efforts to fund the production of standard and new statistics and analyses necessary for evidence-based digital policy;
- align with global governance efforts to support the development of enabling national and regional integrated data governance frameworks; and
- extend earlier G20 endorsements of the role of DPI in development with commitments to ensure a 'people-first' and whole-of-society approach to DPI and emerging technologies.

While representing an important point of consensus among members about what this G20 should prioritise, discuss and do, these recommendations are only a distillation of the issues raised by the task force and in its commissioned policy briefs. Alone, they present a partial picture of the contribution of the task force, as well as the T20 more widely, to global discussions about digital transformation.

One of the key contributions of the T20 is its ability to bring together expertise and evidence from a diversity of think tanks and researchers from across the G20 member states and beyond. This diversity is a critical foundation for global policy discussions about the complex realities presented by existing, emerging and future digital technologies.

To this end, this section of this note captures and shares some of the wider diversity of issues on digital transformation that arose among task force members over the course of the South African G20 presidency. These frame and complement the core recommendations in the communiqué. Each synopsis of these priority areas was co-written by members of the task force. We did not seek to force consensus but rather to present some of the diverse perspectives reflected in and ultimately underpinning the consensus reached in the T20 communiqué.

We argue that the debates, dynamics and evidence raised around this wider set of issues demonstrate the value and potential of the T20 as a space for candid, inclusive debates over global policy issues.

List of priority areas

- Integrated data governance frameworks across country, corporate and individual levels
- Regionalism and regional coordination to redress uneven development
- An equitable and human rights-centred AI 'stack'
- Labour rights in the context of AI and emerging technologies
- Global coordination on digital assets and digital currencies

3.1 Multi-level effort towards holistic and integrated data governance

Globally, there are multiple discussions and frameworks on data governance, in its own right and, increasingly, in the context of AI. Data governance is a priority topic not only on the G20 agenda but also within the UN system, particularly through the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies and the recently established Working Group on Data Governance under the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The working group stemming from the Global Digital Compact offers concepts and practices that could serve as a foundation for implementing national policies tailored to each country's context. Global frameworks are paralleled by national and regional/continental data policy frameworks, resulting in a web of intersecting and diverging policies on the nature, scope and direction of data governance.

Yet, with all this attention, countries of the global majority are often adapting and adopting data governance frameworks shaped by approaches from the Global North. While alignment with global systems supports integration, these models often fail to reflect local contexts,

capacity constraints and vulnerabilities. In Africa, the tension between continental ambitions for harmonised digital economies and the reality of fragmented national policies – frequently influenced by non-African models – further compounds the unevenness of digital outcomes.

Global North-led frameworks inadequately address power issues and the concentration of corporate interests in data and digital development. Yet, data governance affects sovereignty, competition and individual rights, and entails governance struggles to balance protection with beneficial use. Current data and AI governance approaches are largely untested and fragmented, and insufficiently calibrated to domestic contexts. Sovereignty is especially elusive when countries or their citizens are structurally disadvantaged. Further, big tech corporations have become the key sites of data-based power, increasingly replacing public agencies as the primary custodians of society-wide data, but without the same levels of accountability.

Instead, more effective data governance – which encompasses the myriad data-related issues and inequalities globally – requires coalitions, compacts and regulation, where suitably mandated authorities exist to augment limited national agency. For countries of the Global South and/or low-income countries (LICs), the key need is twofold: first, a seat at the table to inform those standards and, second, ongoing learning and collaboration on good practice.

Ways forward for the G20

Catalyse and advocate for the development of holistic data governance framework(s). In practice, this may require advocating for knowledge partners and/or intergovernmental organisations to commission/facilitate a stocktake of what is happening and who is working on this.

To further support this (and, in particular, to attend to the need for compacts to address limited national agency), facilitate the establishment of a multilateral platform that encourages the exchange of ideas and good practice. This could be explicitly aimed at supporting implementation across diverse country and regional contexts (for example, with lessons to be learnt from the different approaches of the Access to Insurance Initiative and the Alliance for Financial Inclusion). In practice, the G20 could facilitate such a collaborative forum by requesting partner organisations to collaborate in its design and to make funding available.

3.2 Regionalisation and regional coordination

The T20 process generally promotes equitable governance frameworks and digital transformation at the national and global levels, but there is a unique opportunity to deepen regional cooperation as well, particularly for emerging DPI approaches. Global governance efforts can inform regional and sub-regional efforts that respond to local contexts. That said, there is a risk of overlapping or misaligned polices, strategies and frameworks. The G20 has a singular role to play in advocating for limiting fragmentation through well-informed standards and effective platforms, while also promoting deeper regional cooperation. Within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area, pan-African solutions as envisaged in the AU Digital Transformation Strategy – mandating harmonised frameworks for a single digital market and interoperable, nationally integrated data systems, and enabling public and private value creation – are increasingly seen as solutions to uneven development across the continent and between the continent and the rest of the world.

With the pan-European DPI plan showcased at the G20 Digital Economy Working Group, the potential of pan-African DPI is increasingly being discussed by the AU Commission and the African Development Bank. For example, some DPI stacks are already serving multiple countries. Examples include payment systems or cross-border trade facilitation. As DPI approaches evolve to include climate, energy, environment, innovative financing, etc., the potential for regional cooperation grows dramatically. For example, the role of DPI in supporting carbon registries in Latin America can, in principle, be applied across many countries in a subregion or within a regional bloc such as ASEAN. Likewise, the use of frontier applications such as DPI to support the effective allocation of renewable energy for green industrialisation could be expanded to multiple countries participating in regional power pools in Africa.

But the key foundations of DPI, particularly verifiable digital identity, trust, public accountability and transparency, will be even more important in cross-border or regional contexts. If trusted – and with appropriate investments and accountability mechanisms – DPI could be leveraged at the regional level for e-health, cross-border taxation, regional business registration, education, land and border verification, online product trading, procurement, etc. There are ongoing efforts to use DPI to support climate efforts, including e-vouchers for smart agriculture, subsidies for clean energy, disaster relief, smart water and energy metering, and sustainable land registration.

With DPI still in its infancy in much of the world, a unique window exists to build out national and regional approaches, underpinned by global standards.

Ways forward for the G20

Active monitoring and knowledge capture of new/frontier uses for DPI as well as early cross-border, subregional and regional approaches. A global agency such as the UNDP could be tasked with establishing a repository and knowledge-sharing platform. This may include benchmarking DPI, definition setting and high-level impact assessment.

An intentional effort is needed to align emerging global standards with emerging regional strategies. For example, the AU has strategies in place for digital transformation, data governance and artificial intelligence. The AU's strategy on DPI should be informed by, and align with, global frameworks. The G20, through the T20 process with a specific sub-pillar on regional DPI governance, can highlight global and regional governance efforts and create forums for knowledge sharing and dialogue.

3.3 An equitable and human rights-centred AI 'stack'

AI's current market concentration limits its global potential and deepens existing inequalities. Countries in the Global South face structural barriers – limited compute access, scarcity of locally relevant data, talent gaps and underdeveloped AI markets – that hinder their ability to build and scale AI models that are contextually appropriate and realise equitable benefits. While open-source AI has the potential to democratise access, its impact is constrained by market concentration rooted in data and infrastructure power. Claims of exclusivity are complemented by intellectual property rights (IPR), which limit meaningful openness and equitable participation.

A crucial element of the training process in AI model development, particularly for large language models (LLMs), is the mass appropriation of text, visual and audio material available in the public domain, including protected artworks and traditional knowledge and art. This has raised concerns about creating knowledge enclosures, as open datasets are cannibalised to build proprietary and closed systems with no concomitant benefit to the artists and traditional knowledge holders or to enrich the commons.

Studies have also shown how dominant models of AI development are incompatible with the knowledge ontologies of Indigenous communities, which increases the invisibility and marginalisation of their language and culture. Another issue of urgent concern is the rise of AI-facilitated gender-based violence, driven by systemic bias, discrimination and harmful

stereotypes embedded across the AI lifecycle, with far-reaching impacts on several aspects of human life.

The lack of legally binding regulatory frameworks makes it difficult to hold AI developers, providers and operators accountable for harms and rights violations stemming from AI systems. Further, institutional readiness to enforce audits or demand transparency from corporations about the algorithmic process is lagging. A growing concern is the increasing use of IPR claims, especially trade secrets, over source code, algorithms, training materials and data sets to evade transparency mandates to access information.

Finally, current development and deployment carry significant environmental costs, particularly in terms of energy and water consumption. Producing AI hardware involves resource-intensive mining for rare materials, the extraction of which has a serious impact on the environment and contributes to water pollution. Communities living near data centres are facing shortages of safe drinking water and pollution of their water resources.

Like the old software adage – 'free not as in free beer or gratis, but free as in freedom to run, study, change, redistribute' – we need structural changes to ensure that open AI is not open as in open to usurp, but open as in egalitarian or 'libre' AI.

Ways forward for the G20

Promote international collaboration to provide competitive computational resources and key components of the AI stack, such as safety and development tools, for public interest use, envisioning a 'CERN for AI'. Further, it could endorse the demand for a digital development tax and a UN Tax Convention that is comprehensive and inclusive, with no carve-outs for the digital economy, so developing countries are not deprived of their rightful share of revenue to build the required digital infrastructure to benefit from data and AI innovation.

Advocate for and help facilitate the development of a standardised monitoring and regulatory framework for data centres across G20 nations to track and report energy use, carbon emissions and water consumption, enabling performance benchmarking, climate goal alignment and corrective action in high-disparity regions. Ultimately, the idea of a sustainable digital transition requires more than a solutionist approach; it requires a rethink of the ideologies underpinning innovation that are based on extraction and hyper-consumption.

3.4 Labour rights in the context of AI and emerging technologies

While emerging technologies, including AI, offer potential benefits such as increased efficiency, productivity and innovation, they are already holding risks for workers' agency, privacy and intensity of work, as well as, more widely, threatening their human rights, fundamental freedoms and dignity.

Labour disruption and exploitation are taking place on two fronts. On the one hand, AI-driven automation is disrupting and replacing jobs. This includes replacing jobs in low-skill sectors such as manufacturing and logistics, with such displacement disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations such as women and workers in LICs. On the other hand, AI systems depend on underpaid, precarious labour for data work, primarily located in the Global South. These workers often lack meaningful redress mechanisms due to the opacity of supply chains and the systemic invisibility of their contributions.

These developments are framed by the highly concentrated nature of power and value capture in the AI industry, in which data is critical to the industry but data work often undervalued, unrecognised and, often, given up for free by workers and communities.

The growth of platform work and the gig economy, as well as the misclassification of workers in various countries, impacts earnings and denies many workers access to labour rights and protections. According to the Worker Info Exchange Report, already low-paid gig workers lost GBP 1.9 billion in unpaid, unutilised working time and associated out-of-pocket operating costs in 2023. In these platforms, workers also face structural barriers to collective action, such as atomisation and dispersion, among other challenges.

The exploitation, unevenness and inequality around AI-related labour point to the importance of paying greater attention to collective bargaining and social dialogue to help govern AI, digitalisation and labour. This will help to confront ongoing and new forms of exploitation and power imbalances in the changing nature of work. Ensuring the visibility and voice of workers globally – including throughout the Global South – in governance discussions is critical to challenging and addressing the disruption and exploitation linked to AI and the nature of work.

The Labour 20 T20 side event to the G20 meeting highlighted the following outcomes, which represent the collective consensus of the unions, researchers and policy institutions present.

1. Participants emphasised the dangers of a concentrated ownership of data, digital infrastructure and AI systems by a handful of multinational corporations. This concentration fuels global inequality, limits the policy space for developing countries and entrenches dependency on external technologies. Data is becoming increasingly valuable – and workers and communities give it up for free – while large corporations profit. Among the crucial steps are:

- stronger regulation of data use and algorithmic systems, with explicit concern to ensure the well-being and equality of workers, firms and countries for all;
- public investment in digital sovereignty, including infrastructure and skills;
- measures to ensure workers and communities benefit from AI-driven productivity gains through redistribution, shorter working hours, improved conditions and gain-sharing; and
- enhanced social dialogue and policy to prevent large-scale job losses due to AI. We have already begun to see such job losses and cannot afford not to take urgent action.

2. The group reaffirmed that collective bargaining and social dialogue must remain central to the governance of AI and digitalisation. Unions and worker organisations must:

- secure the right to organise in digital and AI-mediated workplaces;
- demand transparency in and engagement on algorithmic decision-making processes; and
- negotiate protections on working time, health and safety, data privacy and data use.

3. It was agreed that the research community, unions and think tanks coordinate a joint research agenda that addresses:

- comparative evidence on AI's labour impacts across and within regions, with special focus on gender, youth, vulnerable groups and workers in Africa and the Global South more generally;
- policy-relevant evidence to influence the International Labour Organization (ILO), G20 Employment and Digital Economy working groups, and other global fora;
- further building and supporting African-led research that reflects the realities of the Global South, such as pervasive informality, weak human and labour rights protections, and data extraction without benefit-sharing; and
- AI labour disruption resulting from the most powerful general-purpose technology and the need for a basic income grant.

The future of the global economy, and its impact at national and regional levels, cannot be left to corporate power and technological determinism; it must be shaped by democratic oversight, social and economic justice and global solidarity.

Ways forward for the G20

Promote greater transparency among member countries and by tech companies on labour conditions in AI value chains, as a first step towards more equitable and just AI development to ensure decent working conditions for all. A key role for the G20 in this regard could be to recognise the category of data workers and the importance of protecting the fundamental rights of data workers.

Advocate and support the development of policy-relevant evidence on the harms to workers within the digital and AI economy, from job losses to exploitative working conditions. This could include collating evidence from the T20, as well as advocating for such evidence to be developed and collated by knowledge partners and key actors in the global community, eg, the ILO.

Put mechanisms in place at a global level to hold (tech) companies responsible for any harm caused by their products and ensure that their technologies are developed in a more responsible and inclusive way than they are now.

3.5 Global coordination on digital assets and digital currencies

The governance of digital assets and currencies sits at the intersection of finance, technology and social policy. Central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), stablecoins and other crypto-assets hold the promise of faster, cheaper and more inclusive payments. Yet, their development is occurring through divergent national approaches – ranging from outright prohibition to highly permissive experimentation – that risk producing incompatible infrastructures, raising cross-border transaction costs and undermining global financial stability.

Although, at a high level, these instruments can be grouped under the same overarching category, they differ in structure, rights and duties. This means there are good reasons for differentiated treatment and regulatory processes, while their apparent integration into payment systems requires robust systemic risk mitigation and carefully designed instrument exchange protocols. In other words, CBDCs and crypto-assets are not inherently incompatible, but seamless integration depends on strong interoperability measures.

Treating CBDCs and crypto-assets as separate domains, however, without recognising these interdependencies, compounds fragmentation, obscuring the systemic interconnections that will shape the future of digital finance. Furthermore, most of the debate on digital assets still

treats them in isolation, but their viability depends on integration with existing payment systems and retail usage patterns. Without a bridge to real-economy payments (domestic and cross-border), digital assets risk becoming speculative instruments.

Equally pressing are questions of equity and distribution. The digital economy generates immense new value, but much of it accrues to a handful of countries and corporations, raising concerns about fiscal sovereignty and fairness. For many emerging economies, the shift from labour-based to algorithmic and data-driven value creation threatens to erode already narrow tax bases. At the same time, the expansion of digital finance depends on platform work and AI supply chains where labour is often precarious, poorly compensated and invisible. Digital asset governance that focuses only on technical design without addressing these distributive dimensions risks entrenching exclusion rather than enabling shared prosperity.

Governance debates are typically heavy on technological optimism but light on evidence of real-world outcomes. Payment inclusion work shows that indicators must go beyond uptake to measure usage, resilience and equity. Emerging markets have also pioneered activity-based licensing (eg, mobile money), which allows non-banks to participate safely in payments, thereby enabling market development and inclusion. The same principle can inform digital asset governance.

Trust is another fragile pillar. Digital assets and their underlying infrastructures rely on public confidence, yet opaque algorithms, disinformation and symbolic transparency measures often erode it. Some argue for pragmatic approaches that balance transparency with innovation incentives, while others insist that only robust mechanisms – such as open-source standards, independent monitoring and inclusivity benchmarks – can guarantee legitimacy. The issue of accessibility illustrates this tension clearly. If systems are designed without the participation of marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities, they not only perpetuate discrimination but also miss the opportunity to unlock broader economic gains from inclusivity. While CBDCs and stablecoins are often promoted as inclusion tools, evidence from mobile money shows that regulatory proportionality, consumer protection and trust frameworks are what ultimately drive adoption.

Finally, sustainability and security loom large. The infrastructures that support digital assets (data centres, cross-border payment networks and cloud computing) are energy intensive and geographically concentrated. This creates a paradox: while digital assets may advance efficiency, they risk worsening carbon emissions and exposing societies to geopolitical vulnerabilities. Here too, perspectives diverge. Some emphasise the potential of technological

innovation and market solutions to manage these risks, while others underline the need for regulatory standards, monitoring platforms and deliberate redistribution of infrastructure to reduce imbalances.

Taken together, these reflections point to a single conclusion: global coordination is essential. Fragmentation undermines both stability and efficiency, while the G20 is uniquely positioned to provide coherence without stifling innovation. At the same time, governance must be inclusive and equitable, or it will exacerbate divides between North and South and between powerful corporations and vulnerable workers. Fiscal and labour questions are not ancillary but central to the legitimacy of digital asset governance, just as trust cannot be built on symbolic gestures but requires enforceable standards and genuine transparency. Finally, sustainability and security must be treated as integral to financial governance, not as separate environmental or technical issues.

Ways forward for the G20

Develop harmonised governance frameworks that recognise the structural differences between CBDCs and crypto-assets while mandating robust instrument exchange protocols. The G20 could explicitly link digital asset governance to the global cross-border payments agenda (aligned with the G20 Roadmap for Cross-Border Payments), ensuring interoperability with fast payment systems, remittance corridors and national/regional switches.

Promote secure interoperability and cross-border data portability, drawing on DPI principles and supporting experimentation with multi-CBDC platforms. The G20 could encourage risk-based licensing tiers for digital asset service providers, so regulatory treatment is proportionate to the activity (payments, custody, lending) rather than the institution, and ensure that interoperability protocols address instrument-specific risks while enabling seamless integration into existing payment systems.

Section 4. Summary and final reflections

Over the past four Global South G20 presidencies, the T20 has evolved as a space to facilitate cross-regional discussions and networking. While the presidencies have shifted, networking and collaboration at the T20 have allowed for some continuity and progression on a few key issues, as seen in the digital transformation agenda. This is apparent, for example, in DPI materialising as an area for global cooperation in its own right around India's presidency, and evolving with the Brazilian and South African presidencies to considerations on how it relates to questions of human rights, inclusion and equality, and under what supply- and demand-side foundations. These progressions have not happened organically but through the intentional efforts and network-building of think tanks and experts involved in, but also beyond, the G20 presidency countries of the Global South.

Looking forward, this note aims to indicate the collective discussions and diverse priorities that have surfaced through the framework and structures of the T20 under South Africa's presidency. Evident in this note, each issue raised brings its own considerations and possible recommendations for ways forward, reflecting much deeper and more complex and varied ideas and experiences across G20 countries.

From here, beyond serious consideration of the findings raised through this task force, we suggest that the digital agenda under the four Global South presidencies affirm the value and importance of the preservation of sectoral engagement spaces within the G20 through groups such as the T20. These can help to sustain and strengthen networks over time on topics that require years to be consolidated and implemented by states.

There are multiple ways forward for this agenda.

At an immediate level, we of course push for serious consideration of the T20's recommendations, as well as the wider considerations put forward in this note.

We also look forward to the potential for future T20s and G20s to continue sectoral engagement, bringing together a range of experts, priorities and ideas from member states as well as beyond in the Global South for a genuinely global conversation that takes into account the voices of those most affected by digital transformation policies. The São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, agreed upon at NetMundial+10, are one space of commitment to such co-creation that could be built upon.

There is further scope for the G20 and partners to invest in an open-access repository of documents and policy briefs prepared annually and consistently reviewed by the T20 task forces. These could be consulted at any time by stakeholders and government officials, serving as a foundation for the implementation of public policy beyond any one G20 presidency.

As investment in, development and integration of data-driven and digital technologies continue at pace, evidence-based and inclusive global discussions – across sectors, governments and economies – will be critical to navigating challenging policy questions about what more inclusive, equitable and rights-based digital futures might look like, and how different governance initiatives might support this. This note and the contributions within and beyond the T20 Task Force on Digital Transformation are one effort towards supporting this.

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