



Media and the G20 should respond to the global information integrity crisis

By Janet Heard, M20 policy brief and declaration editor

We live in a global climate of information confusion and uncertainty, with an increasing need to ask: ‘Yes, but is it true?’

We are all losers when unreliable and false information pollutes the public domain. It is a threat to democracy. This is why the push to secure an environment of reliable information needs to get the attention of the public.

This is the backdrop to the global M20 Summit convened by the South African National Editors’ Forum and Media Monitoring Africa on September 1 and 2. Representatives of a wide media network are coming together in Johannesburg during the 2025 South African presidency of the G20, to sound an acute alarm about a profound global crisis in the integrity of information, peace and respect for human rights, including the safety of journalists.

M20 participants will discuss key issues raised in a set of policy briefs to build consensus and a common voice around broad fundamentals. These steps follow previous media initiatives during G20 processes hosted in Brazil (2024) and India (2023). The official G20 baton is to be handed to the United States in 2026.

A Johannesburg M20 Declaration is being drawn up as a result of a collaborative global discussion that calls upon media and partners, and then upon G20 leaders, to take urgent steps to respond to the information integrity crisis, its causes and its impacts.

It affirms that information integrity is essential to sustaining democracy and advancing the G20's 2025 goals of international solidarity, equality and sustainable development.

The draft declaration states that our call is an injunction to everyone to do more to protect press freedom, support the role of journalism, and a human rights-based media ecosystem in its contribution to the public good.

It calls for media to commit to reinforcing the highest standards of journalism ethics, to act as a counterbalance to attacks against information integrity, and to uncover disinformation campaigns, including AI mistakes and deepfakes, and provide access to reliable information to the public.

The draft declaration urges G20 leaders to recognise that severe threats to trust and the digital economy arise when information integrity is damaged by coordinated disinformation campaigns, AI errors, biases, and undisclosed deepfakes.

It calls for shared solutions to the “perfect storm” of the challenges ranging across information integrity, media capture and capitulation, journalists’ safety and targeted attacks, media viability, platforms and AI, children’s and young people’s rights and the climate emergency.

It warns that inaction and “business-as-usual” will see current troubling trends not just persist but worsen.