



03-09-2025

M20 Summit wraps up after the finalisation of the Johannesburg Declaration

Over fifty global organisations have committed to the inaugural M20 Summit Declaration that aims to prioritise information integrity for the public good, among the key issues covered.

Delegates, who met over two days in South Africa, contributed towards key principles of the Johannesburg Declaration that they aim to present to the G20 leaders. The M20 Summit was organised by the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) and Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), ahead of the 2025 South African G20 Summit meeting on November 22-23, 2025, is taking place against alarming threats to independent journalism, media viability, and avalanche of physical and online harms and the upholding of the rights of women and children.

The Summit was unapologetic in calling all stakeholders, media organisations, civil society, technology companies, and policymakers to continue prioritising the issues mentioned in the [Declaration](#). In this context, the Summit identified critical elements that must be prioritised to address the media landscape's multifaceted challenges:

Information Integrity: As the world faces a staggering increase in mis and disinformation, the Summit believes that independent media must reinforce the highest standards of journalistic ethics and develop robust mechanisms to uncover and counter disinformation campaigns, including those fuelled by artificial intelligence (AI). Our integrity hinges on our commitment to deliver credible information to the public, particularly regarding climate sustainability and environmental protection.

Safety of Journalists: The relentless persecution of journalists worldwide, especially in war-torn Gaza, and the Summit says this must be condemned with a call for an end to impunity for those who attack journalists during armed conflicts. We stress the urgency of solidarity in addressing not only physical violence but also the rising tide of online threats, especially those targeting women journalists. A global campaign must be initiated to demand justice for journalists whose lives and work are compromised by violence, intimidation, harassment and authoritarian repression.

Artificial Intelligence: The convergence of media and technology necessitates urgent dialogue on AI's implications for journalism. The Summit hereby advocates for ethical frameworks and policies that ensure fair compensation for journalists whose work feeds AI systems, alongside a commitment to transparency and accountability from technology companies in their usage of journalistic content. This is especially vital for the Global South, where vulnerabilities in technology deployment are most pronounced.

Media Viability and Freedom: The delegates noted the media ecosystem faces an era defined by the financial crisis of journalism and mounting threats to media freedom. They believe that G20 nations must take decisive steps towards establishing sustainable funding models for independent media that prioritise public interest journalism. They emphasised that the media's viability is not merely an economic issue; it is foundational to democratic health and preservation of free societies.

It also included specific input on:

Children's Rights in the Digital Environment, Women in Media and responding to the climate crisis, such as noting:

- In an era dominated by digital horizons, the delegates agreed not to overlook children's and young people's rights because of an urgent need for policies that prioritise their safety, safeguard their voices in digital governance, and guarantee their access to accurate information free from exploitation. Modern AI technologies should be designed and regulated with children's rights at the forefront.
- The unique experiences of women journalists regarding online and offline harassment and the forms of gendered harms and structural inequalities they contend with.
- The importance of access to free, effective, understandable, accessible information and from pluralistic information sources on climate change and environmental issues;

The high-level global discussions held during the M20 Summit brought together diverse groups and expertise, highlighting the critical links between journalism, information integrity, and societal well-being.

The conversation on information integrity underscored that independent journalism is a public good, essential for a functioning society. Panellists emphasised the importance of credible information in addressing global challenges, such as climate sustainability and the energy transition, where misinformation can have devastating consequences.

The focus on the safety of journalists was more than a condemnation of violence; it was a powerful call for solidarity. Discussions emphasised the need for an institutional response to the global crisis of journalist persecution and the rise of online threats, with a specific focus on the unique challenges faced by women journalists.

These conversations reminded the delegates that the state of the media cannot be divorced from broader themes of human rights, democratic governance, and climate action.

As the world looks ahead to the G20 meeting in November, the Summit urged G20 leaders to integrate the vital elements from the declaration into their deliberations and final global declarations. Tackling the crisis of information integrity should be prioritised in all major agendas, as it has the potential to safeguard our democracies and foster global solidarity, equality, and sustainable development.

To this end, the Summit proposed establishing a Media Integrity Monitoring Framework to track progress on G20 and M20 commitments concerning information integrity, media viability, journalist safety, and a safer, more inclusive, digital world. The delegates envisioned this framework as a key tool for accountability and continuous improvement.

The Summit accepted that the challenges may be considerable but regarded its resolve as unwavering. Together acting in solidarity, the delegates said they will endeavour to safeguard the future of independent journalism as a public good and ensure a sustainable, equitable, credible and truthful information ecosystem.

Here is the [declaration](#).

Organisations can contact the [M20 Secretariat](#) to add their names to the list of endorsements.

Ends

For more information contact:

Reggy Moalusi (SANEF): reggym@sanef.org.za or +27 71 682 3695

William Bird (MMA): williamb@mma.org.za or +27 82 887 1370

About M20

The [M20](#) is an independent initiative to ensure issues relating to media integrity and healthy information ecosystems are reflected in the G20 policy agenda.

The M20 mirrors official G20 engagement groups for business, think-tanks, civil society among others, and includes participation in G20 events, convenings of media and information ecosystem role players, hosting of webinars on G20-related issues and publishing policy briefs. It draws on the participation of researchers, experts and networks of international media development organisations and relevant think tanks, civil society, and media organisations among G20 members, as well as from across the African continent.

More info: the [M20 Summit live coverage](#), [the policy briefs](#), and [who is involved in the M20](#), including the international advisory group.

[Website](#) - [LinkedIn](#) - [X](#) - [Instagram](#)