



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL STATEMENT

SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

DOHA, QATAR

4-6 NOVEMBER 2025

Delivered by: Hon Ms Maropene Ramokgopa, Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, and Head of Delegation

Thank you, Mr President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Georgia, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, Uruguay and my own country, South Africa.

Thirty years ago, at the first World Social Summit, we pledged to put people at the centre of development.

Guided by the principles of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, we reaffirm our commitment to a just, equitable, and inclusive global order based on respect for human rights, including the right to development. Sustainable development requires the full integration of economic, social, and human rights dimensions, with people and planet at its core.

Persistent inequalities within and among nations threaten the realisation of all human rights. We therefore call for renewed political will and multilateral solidarity to:

- Address structural barriers that perpetuate poverty and inequality;
- Reform the global financial architecture; so that it serves all nations equitably
- Expand fiscal space through progressive taxation, debt sustainability, and international cooperation, allowing for countries to invest in inclusive, gender responsive social and economic policies

We reaffirm that universal social protection systems are essential enablers of social justice and sustainable development. We emphasise that gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, are integral components of universal health coverage and of a strong social protection infrastructure. Guaranteeing access to these rights for all is fundamental to reducing inequality, improving well-being, and ensuring that social development benefits everyone without discrimination.

When women and girls can decide freely about their health and future, access decent work and access strong social protection policies, families, communities and societies thrive.

The pathway to social development demands renewed commitment and collective action. Let us build societies where equality is non-negotiable, where health and rights are guaranteed for all, and where every person can live with dignity, justice, and opportunity.

I will now deliver remarks in my national capacity.

On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, I extend warm greetings and sincere congratulations to the State of Qatar for hosting the Second World Summit for Social Development.

South Africa aligns with the statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; and the group statement delivered by Chile.

It is an honour to deliver the National Statement at the Second World Summit, three decades after President Nelson Mandela addressed the first World Summit in 1995. We carry forward the same conviction that social development is what makes freedom meaningful.

In this regard, we remain concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, and condemn the abhorrent attacks which deliberately target civilians and essential infrastructure. South Africa supports the efforts of the United Nations (UN) and other international actors working towards the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through diplomatic means. We also remain concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people, especially those in

Gaza. South Africa remains committed to a two-state solution, the State of Palestine and State of Israel, whose viability depends on full and universal respect for international law.

Your Excellencies,

Since 1994, South Africa has made substantial strides in building a social protection framework that reaches millions of people. We now provide monthly social grants to over 44% of our population, underpinned by carefully targeted measures that have reduced hunger, poverty, and inequality, while supporting human dignity, social cohesion, and stability. Built on a strong social protection system, our recent reform initiatives also aim to strengthen the professional social service sector and policies to protect persons with disabilities.

Despite these strides, poverty, inequality, and unemployment, especially among youth and women, remain high. Many of our people remain vulnerable to economic shocks, climate change, food insecurity, and inadequate access to quality services. Our work is far from complete.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa commits to the following priorities, which we believe are important both for our national development and for global social progress:

- Strengthening social protection systems to be more universal, rights-based and shock responsive, so that no child, older person, person with a disability or informal worker is left behind.
- Deepening decent work and inclusive growth, by accelerating youth employment, skills development, entrepreneurship and the transition from informal to formal work.

- Advancing social cohesion, inclusion and non-discrimination, supported by community based social services, mental health and wellbeing.
- Building resilience in the face of climate change, pandemics and other systemic shocks, including securing food systems, water, health services and social infrastructure. In this regard, we wish to express our sympathies with the Government and people of Jamaica following the destruction caused by Hurricane Melissa. This serves as an excellent example of resilience in the face of systemic shocks and the need to strengthen our preparedness to any eventuality.
- Strengthening partnerships and global solidarity. South Africa calls for improved development finance, fairer trade, real technology transfer, and international cooperation that leaves no country behind.

During our G20 Presidency, initiatives such as the call to implement universal social protection systems and social protection floors were adopted by the G20 ministers responsible for development; if implemented, they would go a long way toward reducing poverty and investing in our people.

South Africa commits to investing in social development, strengthening transparency and participation in policymaking, sharing best practices with the Global South, and mobilising resources so that social development remains central to sustainable development.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

South Africa stands ready to work in partnership, to share our experience, to learn, and to act. We believe that with courage, determination, solidarity, and innovative thinking, we can make the Second World Summit on Social Development a turning point for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world.

Thank you. Marhaba. Shukran.