

AFRICA ONE VOICE

G20 IN AFRICA: A MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY



EDITOR'S NOTE



In a season marked by seismic shifts and bold ambitions, this issue of *Africa ONE Voice* confronts a central question: What does it mean for Africa to take ownership of its narrative, its development agenda and its future?

As the G20 turns its gaze toward Africa, and as multilateral partnerships evolve in response to global crises, Africa stands not as a passive recipient but as a co-architect of the world's shared destiny. From the corridors of the African Union to the global platforms of COP, WEF and the Finance in Common Summit, there is a growing call for a just, inclusive and climate-resilient model of development, rooted in African agency. The evolving global landscape is rich with both challenges and opportunities and in this critical moment, Africa's seat at the table is not just earned but demanded.

The G20's shift towards Africa as a focal point symbolizes a monumental opportunity for the continent to assert its voice on the world stage. Yet, it also represents a broader movement towards redefining how Africa

engages with the world, not as a beggar at the door of international decision-making, but as a leader offering solutions that are as visionary as they are pragmatic. This is a call not only to governments but to civil society, business leaders and young innovators who are charting new paths toward a more equitable global order.

As President Paul Kagame stated at the recent AI Summit in Kigali:

"Africa cannot afford to be a consumer of decisions made elsewhere. In this technological moment, we must shape our own future with tools designed for our realities and ambitions."

That message resounds through this issue's pages, from Joseph Nnanna's powerful insights on financial sovereignty to reflections on how media, markets, and policy must be recalibrated to support Africa's voice and vision. These stories remind us that narratives are not neutral: they influence how resources flow, how partnerships are forged and how power is distributed. The media and

global narratives must evolve beyond stereotypical portrayals, placing African voices, aspirations and solutions at the forefront.

In his remarks at the Finance in Common Summit, President Cyril Ramaphosa made it clear:

“For Africa to thrive, development finance must shift from charity to justice, from promises to practice. We are not asking for handouts; we are demanding equitable investment in our shared future.”

These words reflect the spirit of this edition: firm yet hopeful, critical yet constructive. They speak to a generation of African thinkers, leaders and citizens who are rewriting the terms of engagement, not only with the world, but with one another. We are witnessing a resurgence of pride in Africa’s potential, paired with a pragmatic approach to realising this potential through collaboration, policy reforms and systemic

changes. There is a growing recognition that Africa’s growth and prosperity are inseparable from the health of the global economy, and the time to act is now.

As you read, may you be inspired not only by the clarity of vision within these pages but by the courage it takes to imagine differently, and to act decisively. The G20’s engagement with Africa is, indeed, a moment of opportunity. But we must not let it slip into the history books as just another conference; let it be a defining moment in the narrative of African sovereignty, resilience and leadership on the global stage.

Let us ensure it is also a moment of truth, of transformation and of lasting impact where Africa’s aspirations align with global priorities, and where the continent, its people and its future take their rightful place at the heart of global decision-making. 



**WHO HOLDS
THE PEN, HOLDS
THE POWER:**

***Africa's path to
reclaiming its
narrative and
capital***



In a world where global headlines are often written about Africa and not by Africans, the urgency to reclaim the continent's narrative has never been greater. This power imbalance extends far beyond media portrayals; it touches the very heart of Africa's development, access to affordable, equitable and transformative financing.

As Joseph Nnanna, Chief Economist at the Development Bank of Nigeria, explains in a candid interview, this challenge is inseparable from the continent's broader struggle for agency, dignity and ownership, not just in media, but in money.

For decades, the story of Africa has been shaped externally, from the images on television screens to the discussions in boardrooms and policy circles. Africa's story has been written by others, often by those who do not fully understand the continent's complexities. The narratives of poverty, instability and corruption continue to dominate global media, influencing the way the world perceives Africa. These external narratives dictate how African nations are treated, particularly in the global financial system.

While the portrayal of Africa as a continent in perpetual crisis may serve certain interests, it also undermines the continent's true potential. It keeps Africa in

a position of dependence rather than one of agency. The global financial system is built on these perceptions, with higher interest rates for African nations, harsh terms for loans and often unequal representation in decision-making processes. This framework continues to perpetuate the historical dynamics of power and control that were established during colonialism.

Joseph Nnanna, however, sees a clear path to changing this trajectory. His criticism of the G20 Compact with Africa reflects the broader frustration with existing financial frameworks. He acknowledges that while initiatives like the Compact are a step in the right direction, they still fail to address the systemic issues at the heart of Africa's financial struggles.

"The Compact with Africa is good in theory," says Nnanna. "But the conversation remains Eurocentric. The power dynamic is lopsided. We need to be in the room not as recipients, but as equals." These words highlight the deeper issue at play: Africa continues to be treated as a recipient of aid rather than an equal partner in shaping its economic future. The ongoing marginalization of African voices in global financial decision-making reflects a broader, entrenched hierarchy that continues to undermine Africa's ability to chart its own course.

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This imbalance in power goes beyond the financial structures themselves; it also touches on the way Africa is perceived. When African countries are painted as unstable or poorly governed, the financial system reflects this by assigning higher risk to these nations, regardless of the actual economic realities. For Nnanna, this is about much more than money; it is about dignity and fairness. The continent has been repeatedly penalized for its perceived risks and this narrative needs to change.

“We don’t want to be perpetual borrowers,” Nnanna insists. “We want to be builders. But we need the space and support to do it.” This call for equality isn’t merely about debt relief or better terms for loans; it’s a call for a fundamental shift in the way Africa is viewed and treated by the rest of the world. African nations, rather than being seen as perpetual recipients of aid or charity, must be viewed as partners and contributors to the global economic system.

Africa’s path forward is not through charity or dependency. It lies in the ability of African nations to build robust financial systems that serve their own needs. It is in developing local markets, creating homegrown

solutions and fostering economic policies that prioritize the needs of African people over the interests of foreign investors. This requires a level of financial independence that has been denied to the continent for far too long.

The global financial architecture must be reformed to reflect the reality of African economies. African nations must have a seat at the table in global financial institutions, not as passive participants but as equals. Africa should have the ability to shape the rules of international finance, rather than simply accepting terms that were never designed with its best interests in mind. This is the only way the continent can achieve the level of economic sovereignty it needs to develop sustainably and on its own terms.

But a transformation of this magnitude also requires a shift in narrative. The global media and policy landscape must start telling the stories of Africa that reflect its true potential, stories of innovation, resilience and success. Africa is home to some of the fastest-growing economies in the world and the youngest population on the planet. Yet, success stories from

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Development Bank of Nigeria



the continent are often overlooked or underreported. Africa's true potential lies not just in its vast resources but in its people, its innovation and its ability to forge solutions to global challenges.

In an interview with Kealeboga Mokomane, Nnanna provided deeper insight into the practical steps the G20 could take to help address these structural challenges. Mokomane asked how the G20 could create a global framework that directly addresses the high cost of capital in Africa, especially for emerging sectors like renewable energy, infrastructure and AI sectors that are essential for Africa's future. Nnanna responded thoughtfully, acknowledging that while there is no "silver bullet" solution, a multidimensional framework is necessary. This framework would focus on strengthening financial institutions, promoting macroeconomic stability and reducing the heightened risk perception surrounding Africa.

"South Africa has already acknowledged the Cost of Capital Agenda," Nnanna said, noting that this agenda aims to create a level playing field by analysing and recommending measures to reduce the cost of capital for African countries. This effort is crucial, as the continent has seen its debt stock more than double in the last decade, often as a result of harsh loan terms from private and multilateral creditors.

Nnanna also emphasized the importance of scaling up multilateral development banks, improving pandemic preparedness and achieving fair international taxation regimes. Another key element of his vision is mobilizing finance for Africa's just energy transition, which would ensure

that the continent receives its fair share of global climate finance. Despite being disproportionately affected by climate change, Africa has received far less funding for its transition to greener energy.

"This is about equity," Nnanna explained. "Africa, despite contributing just 3.8% of global emissions, has received a fraction of the climate finance it needs to adapt and thrive." To address these issues, the G20 must support reforms that ensure debt sustainability, improve frameworks for financial inclusion and provide relief on financial pressures. Furthermore, establishing credible credit rating systems across the continent, promoting insurance and integrating regional stock exchanges could help African countries attract investment and reduce their reliance on external financing.

"G20 members must buy into these solutions," Nnanna stressed. "Only then can we reduce the unfair risk premiums and ensure that African economies can access the capital they need to invest in critical sectors like infrastructure."

The push for a more equitable financial system for Africa is not just about access to money; it's about dignity, empowerment and ownership. This shift is vital for ensuring that the future of Africa is not dictated by outsiders but by Africans themselves. The power to control the narrative and to control the capital that fuels that narrative is the first step towards Africa's true economic independence.

It's time for Africa to take control of the pen and the future. 



AFRICA'S DIGITAL RENAISSANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We sat down with Dr. Agbokponto Soglo, Bienvenu, Director of Government Affairs Africa & IGA CTO Liaison (PE) at Intel Corporation, to explore the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data governance in Africa's future.

AI and data governance are rapidly emerging as key drivers of transformation across the globe. In Africa, these technologies hold the promise of reshaping critical sectors like healthcare, agriculture and infrastructure sectors that directly impact the continent's future. According to McKinsey, AI could contribute up to \$1.3 trillion to Africa's GDP by 2030, providing a substantial boost to its economy if harnessed effectively. But this potential won't be realised unless we address the urgent need for thoughtful data governance that respects Africa's unique context and needs. For the G20, the opportunity is clear: to foster a global partnership that empowers Africa's digital future, setting the stage for innovation, equity and long-term sustainable growth.

AI is poised to solve some of Africa's most pressing challenges, from health disparities

to food insecurity and infrastructure gaps. In healthcare, AI can support early diagnostics, predict disease outbreaks and optimize healthcare delivery, especially in underserved regions. By improving access to care, AI could help address the continent's shortage of medical professionals and reduce the health disparities that persist between urban and rural areas. For agriculture, where millions of livelihoods depend on smallholder farming, AI could enable precision farming, optimize crop yields, predict weather patterns and reduce waste. This could help Africa achieve food security while supporting rural economies. In infrastructure, AI-powered systems could optimise urban planning, reduce energy consumption and streamline transportation, creating smarter and more resilient cities.

However, the potential of AI cannot be realised without the necessary frameworks for data governance. Data is the foundation of AI, yet African nations face significant challenges in terms of data collection, quality and accessibility. The concept of data sovereignty is ensuring that African countries have control over their data and that is crucial. Without secure, context-

specific data governance, the promise of AI could fall short. Africa’s journey towards AI-powered growth must prioritise frameworks that not only facilitate technological advancement but also ensure that citizens’ privacy and rights are respected.

For the G20, this is where their role becomes indispensable. As global leaders, they have the power to create policies that support equitable data governance and ensure that Africa’s data is treated with the care and respect it deserves. But beyond policy, the G20 can help build the infrastructure necessary for Africa to harness AI effectively. This involves investing in digital literacy, training local talent in data science and AI and creating ecosystems that encourage local innovation. In other words, the G20’s support should go beyond financial backing, it must include long-term, sustainable investments in Africa’s digital future.

The importance of education in this transformation cannot be overstated. Africa’s demographic profile is young, more than 60% of the population is under 25 years old. This provides an unparalleled opportunity to develop a workforce that is equipped with the skills needed to lead Africa’s AI revolution. However, this potential will remain untapped without a robust educational system that integrates AI and data science from early education through to university level. The G20 must ensure that its funding supports these educational initiatives and facilitate the creation of a new generation of thinkers, innovators and leaders who can guide Africa into the digital age.

As AI continues to evolve, it is essential that African nations develop solutions that are tailored to their unique needs. The G20 must recognise that the future of AI on the continent will not look like it does in other regions. Each country in Africa has its own distinct economic, social and political context, and the AI solutions implemented must be as diverse as the continent itself.

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For example, in agriculture, AI tools should not only focus on optimising production but should also consider the challenges faced by smallholder farmers such as limited access to technology, fragmented land ownership and climate change impacts. A one-size-fits-all approach to AI will not work for Africa; the solutions must be locally relevant and community-driven.

This is why the involvement of African stakeholders such as governments, businesses, civil society and academia is so crucial in shaping the future of AI. The conversation about AI governance must be inclusive, ensuring that African voices are central to the decision-making process. Local expertise and knowledge are invaluable and leveraging these insights will ensure that AI solutions are both effective and sustainable.

Moreover, data governance must not only be about protecting citizens' rights but also about building trust. For AI to thrive, people must trust that their data is being used responsibly and transparently. This trust can only be built through clear, fair policies that ensure accountability. The G20 has a significant role to play here by encouraging the establishment of international standards for AI ethics, fairness and transparency that are tailored to Africa's realities. In doing so, they would not only promote innovation but also ensure that AI advances human rights and equality.

Africa's potential to lead in AI-driven sustainability is immense. The continent is already blessed with abundant renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and hydro yet it remains underpowered.





AI can optimise energy grids, predict energy demand and make renewable energy more accessible and efficient. In agriculture, AI could contribute to sustainable practices by reducing water usage, improving land management and increasing yields with minimal environmental impact. This green revolution could be powered by AI, positioning Africa as a leader in sustainable development on the global stage.

For the G20, supporting Africa's AI and data governance efforts is not just a matter of charity; it is a strategic opportunity to foster a more equitable global order. By investing in Africa's digital transformation, the G20 has the chance to empower one of the world's most dynamic regions, creating a ripple effect of innovation that will benefit not just Africa but the entire world. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) will not be met without Africa's active participation and AI offers a unique opportunity to accelerate progress.

Ultimately, Africa's digital renaissance is a story of empowerment, of turning challenges into opportunities, of leveraging innovation to solve local problems and of creating a more sustainable, inclusive future. But to fully realize this vision, the G20 must take bold action. This is not just about funding technology but about fostering a global environment that prioritises equitable access to AI, fair data governance and sustainable practices. Only by working together can the G20 and Africa unlock the full transformative potential of AI and data governance, ensuring a future where technology serves humanity's highest aspirations. 



REIMAGINING AFRICA'S AGRICULTURE FOR A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

When Yolisa Pakela-Jezile looks at Africa, she doesn't just see a continent rich in arable land and vibrant youth. She sees untapped power, a quiet force that, if properly mobilised, could shift the balance of global food systems.

As the Senior Manager of Research at South Africa's Agricultural Research Council, Pakela-Jezile has spent years studying the patterns that have kept Africa on the margins of agricultural innovation and global decision-making. Despite holding 60% of the world's fertile land, Africa remains a net food importer, a paradox that speaks volumes. "We're still heavily dependent on external markets, even though we have the resources to feed ourselves and others," she says.

With the upcoming G20 Summit taking place on African soil for the first time, she believes the moment is ripe for change. For decades, African leaders have called for a more meaningful seat at the table. Now, that table is coming to them and with it, a rare opportunity to influence global economic policy in ways that prioritise Africa's needs. "This is more than a symbolic moment," Pakela-Jezile insists. "It's a strategic one. Africa must use this G20 platform to advocate for policies that reflect our shared aspirations, especially in agriculture which is part of the backbone of our economies."

Her focus on agriculture isn't accidental, across the continent, farming sustains livelihoods, fuels economies and feeds

millions. Yet the sector struggles under the weight of poor infrastructure, fragmented regional policies and limited access to finance. These issues have kept Africa from fully capitalising on its natural assets. But there is a pathway forward, and it lies within the continent itself. Pakela-Jezile is a firm believer in the promise of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Designed to create a single market for goods and services across 54 countries, AfCFTA is more than just a trade pact but it's a chance to break free from dependence. "If African countries can trade more effectively with one another, we can unlock the real value of our agriculture," she explains. "Stronger regional trade means stronger food systems."

Right now, trade barriers and inconsistent standards keep African farmers from accessing regional markets. The irony, she notes, is stark: African countries often import food that could easily be produced within the continent, simply because existing systems make it easier to trade globally than with neighbours. This dependence leaves millions vulnerable to price shocks, supply chain disruptions and the volatility of international markets. For Pakela-Jezile, regional trade is not just about economics but it's about resilience. By building regional value chains and facilitating the movement of goods across borders, Africa can not only improve food availability but also ensure that farmers reap the benefits of their labour at home. Proper trade agreements between African countries are essential. We cannot continue to focus solely on external trade while neglecting the potential we have within our own borders.

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But internal reforms alone won't be enough. Africa also needs international partners that understand the urgency of its food security agenda. Within the G20 framework, Pakela-Jezile believes there's a critical role for global partners to play, not by dictating terms, but by supporting African-led solutions. From climate-resilient infrastructure to access to green financing and agricultural research collaboration, the kind of support that empowers local systems is what's needed most. "The most impactful partnerships are those that listen first and act second," she says. "We don't need charity; we need solidarity."

Pakela-Jezile highlights how uneven financial access across the continent continues to shape agricultural outcomes. In many regions, limited access to credit, insurance and investment opportunities hampers farmers' ability to scale operations, adopt new technologies or recover from climate-related shocks. Strengthening financial inclusion, she argues, must be integral to Africa's agricultural agenda, not just within national policies, but also through regional and international frameworks that prioritise equitable growth and long-term resilience.

Ultimately, Pakela-Jezile's vision is clear: an Africa that feeds itself, trades with itself and shapes its future on its own terms. She sees the G20 Summit not just as a meeting of world powers, but as a moment to reimagine how Africa fits into the global order, not at the margins, but at the center. "This is our time," she says. "And agriculture is where we begin." 



NOT A PROBLEM TO SOLVE, BUT PARTNERS IN POWER

AYA CHEBBI ON WHY THE G20 MUST CENTER AFRICA'S YOUTH

Africa's youth are not a demographic detail, they are the continent's defining force. With over 60% of Africa's population under the age of 25, we are home to the youngest population in the world, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2023).

By 2050, one in four people on the planet will be African, and nearly half of them will be under 25. This is not just a moment of opportunity but it is a global imperative.

Aya Chebbi, a renowned pan-African feminist and founder of Nalafem, has long insisted that ignoring this youth bulge is more than a missed opportunity on the contrary it's a strategic error. "Youth is not a ticking time bomb," she asserts. "They are a time-tested solution. Investing in young people is investing in innovation, peace and prosperity."

For too long, young Africans have been framed as a challenge to manage, rather

than as the visionaries they are. Chebbi's call is clear: development strategies must pivot, from seeing youth as beneficiaries to recognizing them as builders.

If the G20 is to make good on its commitments to a sustainable and inclusive world, it must move beyond aid rhetoric toward meaningful structural shifts. Education, she argues, must be decolonised and funded as a right and not a luxury. According to UNESCO (2023), 98 million children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa are out of school. Without urgent investment in context-relevant, future-oriented education, the continent's promise may falter before it's fulfilled.

But education is just the starting point. "We need to shift from extractive foreign investments to models that seed youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives," Chebbi says. Youth unemployment in Africa remains staggeringly high with nearly 60% of unemployed people on the continent are between the ages of 15 and 24 (World Bank, 2023).

Financing models must adapt, redirecting global funds to local economies, especially



“ Stop treating Africa’s youth as a problem to solve. We are partners, not projects.

Aya Chebbi, Founder of Nalafem

in the digital, creative and green sectors where African youth are already innovating against the odds.

Chebbi is also uncompromising on the matter of debt. “No country can invest in its young people while spending more on debt servicing than on public services,” she says. Indeed, African governments spent an average of 12.5% of their GDP on external debt servicing in 2022 (IMF, 2023), often more than what is allocated for education and healthcare combined. To support Africa’s youth, the G20 must address these unjust financial structures.

Yet, Chebbi insists the problem isn’t just money but it’s power. Despite countless summits and youth-focused campaigns, the systems remain unchanged. “Youth are invited to conferences but excluded from negotiation rooms,” she says. Patriarchy, gerontocracy and tokenism continue to dominate national and international institutions, locking young people out of spaces where decisions are made.

That’s why she champions a radical shift from participation to power. Nalafem, her multigenerational feminist platform, is a working example of what this future could look like. “We are reimagining leadership,” she says. “We’re not asking for seats at

the table, we are building new tables.” With political leadership incubators and support for young women running for office, Nalafem is modelling a new kind of governance feminist, healing-centered, and youth-led.

In Chebbi’s vision, the G20 must play its part not as benefactor, but as co-creator. “We must replace conditional lending with flexible, locally designed financing that supports youth cooperatives and feminist funds,” she argues. “Accountability must flow both ways and not just from recipients to donors, but from funders to the communities they claim to serve.”

And if she were standing before G20 leaders this year? Her message would be as fearless as it is visionary: “Stop treating Africa’s youth as a problem to solve. We are partners, not projects. Our continent doesn’t need saving, it needs solidarity. The question is not whether youth are ready, but whether you are willing to move out of the way.”

In a world hungry for fresh ideas, fair economies, and future-focused leadership, Africa’s youth are not waiting, they are leading. And the rest of the world would be wise to follow. 



REIMAGINING TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE G20 LENS

This year marks a defining moment for the African continent, not because the world has invited us to the table, but because we are arriving with purpose, power and a plan.

With South Africa chairing the G20 and the African Union now a permanent member, Africa is not just participating in global dialogue, we are shaping it. The theme, “Fostering Solidarity, Equality and Sustainable Development,” signals a pivot away from charity and toward mutual prosperity. It is a moment to move beyond narratives of need and instead, champion a bold new vision of African agency, economic justice and opportunity. According to the Journal of African Studies, the African Union’s permanent membership of the G20 represents a new era for Africa in global governance, providing the continent a seat at the decision-making table that was previously reserved for a select few.

But what does it take to make that vision real? What must Africa demand, build and protect in this new era?

To help answer that, ONE sat down with with Eman Mustafa, a leading development economist at Afreximbank, whose career has spanned the African

Development Bank, USAID, the World Bank and other global institutions. For her, this G20 presidency is more than symbolic, it is a strategic inflection point that must be seized with clarity, confidence and coordination.

Mustafa’s central message is simple but urgent: The time to reshape Africa’s economic relationships both within and beyond the continent is now and the tools to do so are already within our grasp.

She points to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a transformative mechanism that can unlock intra-African trade, industrialization and local value creation. At a time when global trade is being shaped by new tariffs and shifting alliances, AfCFTA offers Africa a critical buffer and an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine its economic future on its own terms. In a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, it was highlighted that AfCFTA holds the potential to increase intra-Africa trade by over 50%, positioning the continent as a significant player in the global market (The Impact of AfCFTA on African Trade: Opportunities and Challenges). But for this vision to take root, Africa must go beyond tariff elimination. The real work lies in building the physical and digital infrastructure that can support

regional supply chains, connect producers to markets and unlock the full potential of African enterprise.

Infrastructure development, especially green and digital, is in Mustafa’s view, non-negotiable. She highlights projects like the Lobito Corridor as blueprints for what’s possible when strategic investment meets regional cooperation. A Journal of African Development paper underscores how such transport corridors enhance regional integration, connecting trade routes across Africa and boosting economic activity.

Beyond transport, digital infrastructure offers immense potential to empower Africa’s young and entrepreneurial population. Countries like Kenya, Morocco and Ghana are already making significant strides in exporting digital services, but Mustafa emphasizes the need for scale and harmonization across all 54 countries. In the International Trade Centre’s report on the future of digital trade, it’s noted that e-commerce and mobile payments are crucial in ensuring Africa’s competitiveness in the global digital economy.

“If we want inclusive growth, we need inclusive systems,” she says. “Digital trade, mobile payments, e-commerce frameworks, these are not luxuries. They are



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Eman Mustafa, leading development economist,
African Development Bank

the new foundation of competitiveness.”

Sustainability, too, must be embedded into Africa’s trade policies not as a checkbox, but as a guiding principle. Mustafa points to initiatives like Gabon’s certified sustainable timber exports and Morocco’s leadership in solar energy as powerful examples of what green trade leadership can look like. Gabon’s sustainability initiatives have been recognized as a model in the African forestry industry, while Morocco’s shift to solar energy has placed it at the forefront of green trade leadership. These efforts are in line with McKinsey & Company’s findings that green infrastructure can create long-term economic opportunities across Africa. She notes that aligning African standards with mechanisms like the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is essential not only to protect exports but to strengthen the continent’s position in a climate-conscious global market.

But even the best policies won’t succeed without the means to finance them. And that’s where financial sovereignty comes into sharp focus. Mustafa welcomes the establishment of the Alliance of African Multilateral Financial Institutions (AAMFI), calling it “a landmark step toward self-determination.” With a collective balance sheet exceeding \$62 billion, AAMFI has the potential to co-finance major infrastructure projects, support debt restructuring and invest in critical sectors, from minerals to health, on Africa’s own terms. According to a Business and Financial Times article, AAMFI’s collective balance sheet makes it a critical financial pillar for supporting Africa’s development goals, providing an alternative to traditional Western financing models.

“We can no longer rely on external actors to fund our development. We need to mobilize our own resources and design financing solutions that work for Africa,” she says.

At the heart of all of this is a call for shared responsibility. Mustafa believes advocacy organisations like The ONE Campaign have a key role to play in helping citizens, especially young people, understand and engage with these complex issues. “Raise awareness. Build capacity. And make sure that the policy wins we push for are implemented. We don’t just need voices; we need informed and mobilized action.”

As our conversation draws to a close, Mustafa offers a perspective that echoes far beyond the boardrooms of policy and finance: “This is Africa’s moment, not just to be seen, but to lead.”

But leadership, she reminds us, is not simply about presence, it’s about purpose. It is about rewriting the rules, investing in our people and asserting a vision that is bold, collaborative and unapologetically African.

The world may be watching as South Africa leads the G20, but Africa isn’t waiting for validation. From Kigali to Cairo, Dakar to Nairobi, the continent is already mobilizing its resources, redefining its voice and reimagining its place in the world.

The task now is to match that momentum with courage, to turn frameworks into action, declarations into policy and potential into power. Because the future we seek is not something to be negotiated behind closed doors. It is something to be built, by us, with us and for generations to come. 



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