

# Celebrating 100 G20 meetings across India

The meeting of agricultural chief scientists in Varanasi this week marked the successful completion of 100 meetings of India's G20 presidency across states, spotlighting our nation's unique model of cooperative federalism that places democratic and inclusive policy processes at the heart of its agenda. This remarkable achievement highlights India's commitment to fostering inter-governmental cooperation and collaborative decision-making, setting a precedent for other nations to emulate.

In the four months since India assumed the mantle of the G20 presidency, all 13 working groups under the sherpa track, 10 out of 11 engagement groups, and four G20 initiatives have completed their first meeting. The G20 Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (G20 EMPOWER), Research & Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG), Chief Scientific Advisers Roundtable (CSAR), and the Space Economy Leaders Meeting (SELM) have successfully hosted their inception meetings.

Further, these meetings have been organised across 19 states and Union Territories, translating India's all-of-government approach into effective cooperative federalism across 30 cities. The flow-on effect of hosting the presidency has been vast, whether in terms of spotlighting local cultural traditions and handicraft practices on the global stage or showcasing India's incredible natural and architectural beauty, thus providing added impetus to a post-Covid-19 surge in tourism.

India acknowledges that addressing global challenges requires collaborative efforts, as evident in our theme *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, meaning "One Earth, One Family, One Future." The G20 presidency's inclusive pan-India approach, centred on *Jan Bhagidari* or citizen's engagement, underscores our commitment to making the G20 a platform that is truly representative of and responsive to the people's needs. In line with our values, India has long held active public participation at the core of its policy formulations. As such, our G20 ambitions are in tune with a human-centric approach to development. The G20 engagement groups form the bedrock of constructive civil engagement within the ambit of high-level multilateral negotiations and have a significant share of voice in shaping India's G20 agenda.

During India's G20 presidency, the working groups have made significant progress in addressing critical global priorities. The agriculture working group has proposed solution-based approaches for food security and nutrition, focusing on climate-smart agriculture, inclusive value chains, and digitisation for agricultural transformation. Digital transformation has been a cross-cutting priority, with the health working group proposing initiatives, such as the global initiative on digital health and an IT-enabled pandemic-management platform. The digital economy working group is shining a spotlight on India's innovative, open-source, and interoperable digital public infrastructure (DPI) that has empowered billions of people and led to significant financial and social transformation. This presents a unique opportunity for India to impart best practices, having successfully developed and deployed ground-breaking initiatives such as Aadhaar, CoWIN, UPI, e-KYC, and ONDC, at an unprecedented scale.

The education working group is adopting

digital inclusion for inclusive and collaborative tech-enabled learning, focusing on universal foundational literacy and numeracy. India has started a new engagement group, Startup20, to provide a major impetus to innovation. This has received overwhelming support.

Climate action is a key priority, with the environment and climate sustainability working group focusing on finance and technology and the energy transitions working group spearheading just energy transitions, including setting the foundations for India as a green hydrogen hub.

The development working group is coordinating efforts to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting India's behaviour-based movement, Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), which incentivises communities and markets to adopt environmentally conscious practices. The group has also engaged with other fora, including the Conference of the Parties presidency of the United Arab Emirates, upcoming G20 presidencies of Brazil and South Africa, and Japan's G7 presidency, to further India's developmental priorities.

In this presidency, India has also established the disaster risk reduction working group for the first time to encourage collective research and exchange of best practices on disaster risk reduction. The anti-corruption working group has seen strong participation from member-countries, with India set to host the first-ever in-person anti-corruption ministerial meeting.

India's trade and investment working group has an extensive list of priorities, including trade digitisation, developing hinterland logistics, financing needs of micro, small and medium enterprises, building resilient global value chains, and reforming global financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization. The group has also focused on women's economic empowerment and promoting sustainable trade. Finally, the tourism and culture working groups are working hard to boost green tourism as a driver of growth, and preserve and promote traditional cultures and cultural properties, respectively.

In parallel, all working groups under the finance track have also convened at least once, prioritising global macroeconomic concerns, such as addressing debt distress, monitoring global economic risks, reforming international financial architecture, international taxation, financing quality infrastructure, sustainable finance, financial inclusion, and preparedness for global health emergencies.

The G20 presidency will host the largest-ever contingent of delegations in the final New Delhi Summit in September — 43 to be precise, including from six African countries — indicating that India's leadership has every intention to be "inclusive, ambitious, decisive, and action-oriented," as Prime Minister Narendra Modi envisioned. The in-person presence of delegates across working groups, especially at the ministerial level, testifies to the willingness of member-countries to come to the table at a time of global crises and turmoil. The G20 presidency is an exercise in diplomacy, coordination, and deep research at the highest level, and the foundations we build today will go a long way in developing a cleaner, greener, more equitable world for all.



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