



J20 SUMMIT STATEMENT

03 – 04 September 2025

Johannesburg, South Africa

OPENING STATEMENT:

We, the representatives of the judiciaries gathered at the J20 Summit, met under the theme "**Justice in a Time of Change: Independence, Innovation and Cooperation**". We gathered, mindful of our unique judicial structures and of the differing challenges in our specific contexts, to engage in constructive dialogue on the critical role of Judiciaries in our current global context. We recognised that we are living in an era of global challenges and opportunities that transcend national borders.

This statement reflects the deliberations and shared perspectives emerging from our discussions across four themes, including transnational issues such as judicial independence, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) environmental degradation and cybercrime.

ABOUT THE J20 SUMMIT 2025

The J20 Summit 2025, hosted by Chief Justice Mandisa Maya, Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, was held from 03 September 2025 until 04 September 2025 in Sandton, Johannesburg. This Summit was preceded by the J20 Summit held in Brazil during 2024.

The J20 Summit serves as a forum for international judicial co-operation where current ideas, experiences and initiatives concerning contemporary legal topics are exchanged and debated. Under the South African Presidency, the J20 Summit 2025, sought to provide a platform for the Judiciaries of the jurisdictions of the G20 countries as well as other invited guest countries and judicial bodies, to meet and discuss matters of mutual global importance and to foster greater co-operation amongst attendees. The Summit that has concluded eminently served this purpose.



PARTICIPANTS:

The following participants attended the J20 Summit 2025:

Heads of Constitutional Courts / Supreme Courts or their designated representatives,
of the G20 member countries:

Australia*

Brazil

France

India

Indonesia

Republic of Korea

Russian Federation

Saudi Arabia

Türkiye

United Kingdom

*Not in a position to endorse the Statement.

Heads of Constitutional Courts / Supreme Courts or their designated representatives
of guest countries of South Africa's G20 Presidency:

Algeria

Ireland

Singapore

Heads of Constitutional Courts / Supreme Courts or their designated representatives
invited by the Chief Justice:

Angola

Mozambique

Heads of Court and Judicial bodies invited by the Chief Justice:

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (Chief Justice of Zimbabwe)

Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices' Forum (Chief Justice of the Kingdom of Eswatini)

Knowledge partners:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

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KEY THEMES

The following statements represent what emerged both during the presentations and discussions on the key themes of the Summit.

**THEME 1 - ADVANCING JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY;
PRESERVING THE RULE OF LAW AND REINFORCING JUDICIAL SECURITY IN
AN EVOLVING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE**

- I. The presentations made underscored the importance of maintaining independent and accountable Judiciaries, whose safety is ensured, to preserve the rule of law and protect the human rights and freedoms on national and international level.
- II. It was affirmed that judicial independence requires a commitment to judicial security.
- III. It was alluded to, that the principles of judicial independence and judicial accountability and the different points of view regarding them in many parts of the world, exist. It was noted that efforts to strengthen the former must be carefully crafted to not inadvertently compromise the latter.



- IV. It was highlighted that technology can significantly enhance public trust and accountability by strengthening access to justice and transparency to the public, and it can also accelerate judicial processes.
- V. It was further stated that while technology can increase judicial accountability and transparency, it presents risks to Judges and judicial independence. Ensuring Judges' data security, safety from cyber-attacks and providing training for safe engagement with technology were recognised as important considerations, to be implemented in accordance with the respective domestic policies.
- VI. The Summit heard concerns about the threats that intolerance, rising authoritarianism, and discrimination pose to the rule of law in many parts of the world. The Summit discussed the value of developing protocols to voice concerns of such threats and to show solidarity with Judiciaries affected.

THEME TWO: BALANCING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INNOVATION WITH FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN JUDICIAL SYSTEMS

- I. The potential for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to increase efficiencies within judicial systems was widely recognised, however, it was affirmed that appropriate human supervision in developing AI tools, and human responsibility for decision-making, remains paramount.
- II. AI, in its current state, has limitations and its use in justice systems poses risks. It was affirmed that the implementation of suitable precautions is necessary to ensure AI operates within safe boundaries and in a manner that safeguards the fair and equal treatment of all parties before the court.



- III. The utility of courts issuing guidelines to educate lawyers and litigants on the use of generative AI and methods to prevent its misuse in court processes was noted.
- IV. The importance of establishing frameworks to govern the use of AI in the courts, and the value of transnational cooperation to share ideas and potentially develop model frameworks that can be adapted by different courts, was emphasised.
- V. As AI capabilities grow, the importance of courts remaining abreast of developments to ensure proper oversight was acknowledged. Continuing judicial education, dialogue, and exchanges were recognised as valuable means to encourage communication and collaboration between Judiciaries.

THEME THREE: CLIMATE CHANGE JUSTICE THROUGH JUDICIAL COLLABORATION

- I. It was indicated by some participants that we have diverse domestic legal systems which may form the basis for environmental protection. This diversity presents an opportunity for mutual learning.
- II. It was stated by some participants that climate change litigation may require a greater transnational component, particularly for cross-border or intergenerational claims for relief where the source of the mischief spans international boundaries. Other participants indicated that as per international climate agreements, claims should be based on national laws. Moreover, it became clear that environmental challenges must be addressed as a shared responsibility of all humanity.



- III. Climate migration being a significant challenge, was discussed as one of the most significant negative impacts of climate change with regards to developing countries.
- IV. During the deliberations, there was a recognition that climate change presents challenges, conferring a responsibility on Judiciaries to obtain necessary expertise, in line with the principles established in international climate agreements such as the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and climate action, sustainable development, historical responsibilities, among others. Courts also need to be mindful that addressing these challenges requires the contribution of all fields of human knowledge such as law, science, economics or any other relevant fields, without simplifying these international challenges or disturbing the ongoing global cooperation in this regard.
- V. The importance of meaningful public participation was emphasised, and it was noted by some participants that Judiciaries may need to play a more active role in ensuring proportional contributions from the public to strengthen the voice of climate justice. In this context, participants praised the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued on 23 July 2025, as an important reference for achieving and activating judicial cooperation in the field of climate justice.

THEME FOUR: COMBATTING CYBERCRIME: STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER JUDICIAL COOPERATION.

- I. The borderless nature of cybercrime was noted and the resultant necessity of enhancing collaborative responses between jurisdictions. Diplomacy, mutual legal assistance treaties, and other multilateral agreements were viewed as essential for building coherent and uniform global responses.



- II. The value of developing global databases for offences was mentioned and standardising the recognition of court documents across jurisdictions was discussed. Such measures, built on an understanding of individual nations' legal requirements, and relevant international agreements, could significantly reduce delays in investigations and prosecutions.
- III. It was stated that while law retains a fundamental relationship with jurisdictional identity, a continuous effort to identify common priorities is crucial for effective cooperation.
- IV. The imperative to safeguard citizens' rights to data privacy, particularly when data is held or moved between states with uneven statutory protections, risking abuse by state and non-state actors, was alluded to. The need to balance privacy rights with society's legitimate interest in sharing information for public safety was emphasised.
- V. The Summit recognised the importance of modern legal procedures evolving in parallel with the development of advanced, technologically driven forensic capacities to effectively combat cybercrime, in line with different national laws.
- VI. Amidst these complex challenges, a view was expressed that we must not be pessimistic and that behind all technological developments lay enduring values of civilisation, fundamental laws that reflect our ways of life, and the everlasting features of human nature and social relations.

End
