

The G20's Governance of Africa-Related Issues, 2008–2016

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Introduction

This report analyzes the focus of the Group of 20 (G20) on Africa and its support for Africa-related issues, covering its deliberations, principled and normative directions set, decisions made and delivered, and institutional development of regional governance. The analysis assesses the G20's governance of Africa-related issues by tracking any direct mention of the African continent as a whole, reference to one of the 54 African countries, or reference to an international organization founded and based in Africa, such as the African Union, in the official documents G20 leaders release collectively at their annual summits. It also examines how the G20 has developed global governance both inside and outside the summit institution itself. It conducts a case study of the G20's governance of Africa-related issues at the G20 summit held in Hangzhou, China, on September 4–5, 2016. It concludes that Hangzhou was mostly a “talk shop” on Africa-related issues, although there were important advances in key areas of the assessed dimensions of performance.

Significance

The G20's governance of Africa-related issues has largely been overlooked in the scholarly literature. However, as the G20 increases its focus on Africa so too will interest increase within academic circles. At the 2016 Hangzhou Summit under the Chinese presidency, Africa received far more attention from G20 leaders than ever before. This trend will likely continue under the German presidency in 2017 with the first ever Think 20 (T20) Africa Conference taking place in Johannesburg, South Africa, on February 1–3, 2017.

Although several countries in Africa have experienced impressive growth rates over the past three decades, Africa remains the poorest continent in the world. With the G20 as a global economic governance club founded on a mission to ensure that globalization benefits all, its focus on Africa-related issues — including poverty, development, health and industrialization — is of primary importance.

Schools of Thought

Arguments about the G20's performance on Africa-related issues are evident in several schools of thought.

G20 as a Talk Shop on Africa

The first school contends that the G20 is merely a talk shop for Africa-related issues. In a [2012 working paper](#) Daniel Bradlow argued that although the G20 addresses African interests, the discussion “is often at a general level and without either making commitments to specific actions or providing specific details that could assist African countries and their partners in formulating and implementing their own strategies for addressing these interests.” This school suggests that the “G20

performs its awareness promoting function more effectively [than] its global economic governance function” when it comes to Africa-related issues.

Underrepresented Africa

The second school of thought asserts that [Africa is underrepresented in the G20](#), due to the fact that one G20 member is an African country. This school contends that underrepresentation is perhaps the primary reason why Africa-related issues are not always incorporated into the G20 agenda or official summit documents.

Missed Opportunity for Africa

Similarly, the third school agrees that Africa is underrepresented in the G20. Conversely, however, this school attributes Africa's poor representation to the region's inability to exploit the opportunities for involvement made available by the G20. In the lead-up to the 2014 Brisbane Summit, Catherine Grant Makokera argued that the two African invited guests — Mauritania and Senegal — had already missed an opportunity to increase Africa's representation at the G20 before the summit had even begun. As she correctly [pointed out](#), “much of the real work on the agenda is done in the preparatory meetings that take place before heads of state get together at the (short-lived) annual event.” Grant Makokera went on to say that, “for example, in 2014 the Australians hosted more than 60 official G-20 meetings in their role as chair. There was potential for Mauritania and Senegal to join most of these discussions but that was not the case and the two additional African chairs largely remained empty.”

Defensive, Self-Interested South Africa

A fourth school sees defensive, self-interested South Africa as partly to blame for Africa's poor representation and influence in the G20. It contends that South Africa does not actively try to further the interests of the continent as a whole but only furthers those of South Africa alone. Peter Fabricius pointed out [in an article for the Institute for Security Studies](#) that “Pretoria seems to downplay its African representivity in the G20 more, now that Nigeria has overtaken South Africa as the continent's largest economy.” Fabricius contends that South Africa has “done a good job ... of representing African interests indirectly and unofficially through its participation in the G20's Development Working Group, as well as more directly, by providing feedback of G20 work to the AU [African Union] and the African Development Bank.” However, as a whole, Fabricius argues, “South Africa's membership ... [does] not amount to adequate African G20 representation.”

Hangzhou as a Disappointment

The fifth school of thought highlights the [failure of the Hangzhou Summit](#) on issues of sustainable development in Africa, the refugee crisis in North Africa and African industrial development. Proponents assert that rather than focusing on issues within Africa, G20 leaders focused on the success and development of the G20 and the other more prosperous members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Puzzles

Although the various schools of thought offer a range of general insights into the G20's governance of Africa-related issues, they do not provide a systematic or comprehensive examination of the G20's performance. To acquire a more inclusive and evidence-based understanding of the G20's performance on Africa, it is essential to examine carefully how the G20 has governed Africa-related issues in the past. This examination is done by measuring the five dimensions of performance developed by John Kirton of the G20 Research Group: deliberation, direction setting, decision making, delivery and the development of global governance. This analysis facilitates a more accurate

understanding of the G20's governance of Africa-related issues, both historically and at present, and a better prediction of its future performance, starting at the Hamburg Summit on July 7–8, 2017.

Thesis

From the London Summit in 2009 to the Antalya Summit in 2015, the G20's governance of Africa-related issues showed slow, marginal increases, as measured by the five dimensions of performance. At Hangzhou in September 2016, however, there was a dramatic increase to a record high in G20 performance in Africa-related deliberation, direction setting and the development of global governance. Nonetheless, the 2016 summit fell short in decision making, delivering only five Africa-related commitments — the same number as the Antalya Summit the year before. It thus seems that the G20's new and increased focus on Africa under the Chinese presidency was still more talk and no action.

With the upcoming Hamburg Summit, and with the German host Chancellor Angela Merkel's [commitment to G20 investment in Africa](#), governance of Africa-related issues will likely continue to increase G20 performance on deliberation, direction setting and the development of global governance, as well as improve its performance in decision making and delivery. Moreover, with the increasing weight of emerging economies, such as the BRICS members of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and G20 members Argentina and India preparing to host the G20 summit in 2018 and 2019 respectively, Africa-related issues will likely take a more central role in all dimensions of G20 performance.

Dimensions of Performance

Deliberation

G20 deliberation on Africa is measured by the total number of words, paragraphs and documents dedicated or referring to Africa in the leaders' collective, official summit documents. Deliberation also considers the share of words, paragraphs and documents dedicated to Africa as a percentage of the total produced at each summit.

G20 deliberation on Africa has gone through five phases (see Appendix A). The first phase in 2008 saw Africa completely absent. The second phase, between 2009 and 2010, saw an increase in references to Africa as a percentage of the total number of words in all official documents, around 2% for all four summits in that period. The third phase, between 2011 and 2012, saw a notable rise in references to Africa, taking up 6.13% of deliberations at Cannes in 2011 and 4.95% at Los Cabos in 2012. The fourth phase, from 2013 to 2015, saw a decrease in references, with an average percentage of words ranging between 1 and 2%. The fifth and current stage, beginning with the Hangzhou Summit in September 2016, has an unprecedented increase in the number of references to Africa, with a total of 8.04%.

Direction Setting

Direction setting is measured by affirmations of the G20's foundational principles of ensuring global financial stability and making globalization work for the benefit of all in the communiqué passages on Africa.

The G20 has performed poorly on Africa-related direction setting (see Appendix B). The G20 has never made an Africa-related affirmation of financial stability. Starting at Cannes in 2011 and Los Cabos in 2012, the G20 made one Africa-related affirmation to make globalization work for all. At Hangzhou in 2016, G20 leaders made the highest number of affirmations with three.

Decision Making

Overall, at all 11 summits G20 leaders made a relatively low number of 34 Africa-related commitments compared to the higher number made on core issue areas such as development, trade, health and energy (see Appendix C and Appendix D). Nevertheless, there has been an overall increase and some substantial broadening in the annual number of Africa-related commitments since the first ones made at London in 2009 (see Appendix C).

At London, G20 leaders made four Africa-related commitments, all of which were development ones. At the next summit, at Pittsburgh in 2009, three Africa-related commitments were made, with one on development. The number of Africa-related commitments stayed at or below three for the next three summits, before rising to four at Los Cabos in 2012 and then going back down to three at St. Petersburg 2013 and Brisbane 2014. The next two summits delivered the highest number of Africa-related commitments ever, with five each at Antalya 2015 and at Hangzhou 2016.

At Hangzhou, those five commitments were again dominated by development, with four of the five on this issue. Here [G20 leaders committed to](#) “support industrialization in developing countries, especially those in Africa and Least Developed Countries” and to “achieve a successful ... 14th replenishment of the African Development Fund.”

Indeed, the majority of Africa-related commitments have been development ones - 16 of the 34 made to date. Africa's representation in core development commitments is far higher than its representation in any other core issue area, demonstrating the G20 leaders' focus on African development (see Appendix C). Other Africa-related commitments have been health, trade, labour and employment, macroeconomic policy, social policy, and food and agriculture.

Delivery

On delivery, members have complied with the four assessed Africa commitments at a level of 58%: two on development and one each on climate change and reform of international financial institutions (IFIs). For the two development commitments, it was +0.13 (57%). Compliance with the climate change and IFI reform commitments was similar, at +0.25 (63%) and +0.05 (53%), respectively. Overall, G20 compliance with Africa-related commitments has been relatively low compared to the G20's overall compliance average of +0.41 (71%) on all 191 commitments assessed across all issues.

Development of Global Governance

In the institutional development of global governance in Africa, performance has been weak inside the G20 but substantial outside. This is seen in the number of mentions in the G20's Africa-related official summit documents to institutions inside the G20 family and those outside. For Africa, the development of global governance outside has typically been much stronger than inside at a ratio of 79:5 (see Appendix E).

For the development of global governance inside, all five references to Africa were spread across five different institutions: the High Level Panel for Infrastructure Investment, the Sokoni Africa Infrastructure Marketplace, the Development Working Group, the G20 Study Group on Climate Finance and the AgResults Initiative. With regard to the development of global governance outside, the United Nations is referred to most frequently, with the World Bank and OECD tying for second.

The Case of the Hangzhou Summit, September 4–5, 2016

Hangzhou, China September 4–5, 2016

The 2016 Hangzhou Summit was unique for its [focus on Africa](#), which was identified as a key priority several times in the lead-up to the summit (Kirton 2016).

On December 1, 2015, China's President Xi Jinping delivered his first formal [statement](#) on the Hangzhou Summit, the first G20 summit to be held in China. Xi identified among the priorities the industrialization in Africa and least developed countries (LDCs).

On May 26, 2016, foreign minister Wang Yi presented a [list of ten expected deliverables](#) for the summit. Seventh on the list was the industrialization of Africa and LDCs. "As the biggest developing country in the world, China has the responsibility of maintaining and expanding the rights and interests of other developing countries," Wang stated. It can also be seen as evidence of China's growing concern with African development in general.

In an [article](#) published on the eve of the summit, Xi emphasized four key goals, which once again included the industrialization of Africa and LDCs. He wrote that "to narrow the global development divide, [G20 leaders] are leading the way in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We will issue a G20 Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and LDCs and work for the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to ensure equal access by all people to the benefits of development." The continuous inclusion of Africa pointed to a potential, and seemingly promising, turning point in the G20's Africa governance.

The Hangzhou Summit was followed by the Investing in Africa Forum on September 7-8, 2016, organized by the Government of Guangdong Province, the People's Republic of China, the China Development Bank and the World Bank Group. It included a focus on Africa's industrialization.

The Hangzhou Summit, however, primarily turned out to be a talk shop for Africa-related issues. G20 deliberation soared to a new height but decision making remaining at the same level as at Antalya in 2015. Those who had high hopes for Hangzhou as a turning point in the G20's Africa governance were largely [disappointed](#). Nevertheless, the G20's newly improved performance on Africa-related direction setting, deliberation and development of global governance pointed to an increased G20 focus on Africa-related issues, and a promising foundation on which to build.

Conclusion

G20 performance on Africa-related issues between 2008 and 2015 showed only slow, incremental increases, followed by a significant rise in performance in deliberation, direction setting and development of global governance at Hangzhou in 2016. The G20's governance of Africa-related issues will likely continue to make strides in all dimensions of performance, including decision making and delivery, as the continuing emphasis on Africa in the lead-up to the 2017 Hamburg Summit suggests. This advance is likely a result of the rising capability of the emerging economies within the G20, especially the BRICS countries, and their ability to influence the G20 agenda in favour of their fellow emerging and least developed countries outside the G20 club. Moreover, with Argentina and India gearing up to host the 2018 and 2019 summits, there will likely be even more focus on Africa and LDCs in general.

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Appendix A: Summary of Conclusions on Africa in G20 Leaders' Documents

Summit	# words	% total words	# paragraphs	% total paragraphs	# documents	% total documents	# dedicated documents
2008 Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009 London	113	1.84	2	1.22	2	66.70	0
2009 Pittsburgh	220	2.38	3	2.33	1	100.00	0
2010 Toronto	266	2.40	4	2.08	1	50.00	0
2010 Seoul	328	2.08	4	1.16	3	60.00	0
2011 Cannes	863	6.13	10	6.58	3	100.00	0
2012 Los Cabos	630	4.95	4	1.95	2	50.00	0
2013 St. Petersburg	276	0.96	4	0.75	2	18.20	0
2014 Brisbane	250	2.74	2	0.91	1	20.00	0
2015 Antalya	35	0.25	1	0.28	1	16.70	0
2016 Hangzhou	1,287	8.04	12	1.10	3	75.00	0

Notes:

Data are drawn from all official English-language documents released by the G20 leaders as a group. Charts are excluded.

words = the number of Africa-related subjects for the year specified, excluding document titles and references. Words are calculated by paragraph because the paragraph is the unit of analysis.

% total words = the total number of words in all documents for the year specified.

paragraphs = the number of paragraphs containing references to Africa for the year specified. Each point is recorded as a separate paragraph.

% total paragraphs = the total number of paragraphs in all documents for the year specified.

documents = the number of documents that contain Africa subjects and excludes dedicated documents.

% total documents = the total number of documents for the year specified.

dedicated documents = the number of documents for the year that contains an Africa-related subject in the title.

Appendix B: Direction Setting, 2008–2016

Financial Stability

	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou	Total
Financial system stability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prevent future crisis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stabilize impact of crisis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Notes: The unit of analysis is the sentence.

Inclusions: financial system stability; prevent future crisis; stabilize the impact of crisis; manage the impact of the crisis.

Exclusions: general reference to a crisis; another crisis that is not the global financial crisis.

Globalization for the Benefit of All

	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou	Total
Inclusive growth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Global growth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poorest	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Most vulnerable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inclusive world economy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
All parts of the globe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	5

Notes: The unit of analysis is the sentence.

Inclusions: inclusive growth; global growth; equal; poorest; the poor; most vulnerable; inclusive world economy; all parts of the globe.

Exclusions: least developed countries; broadly shared growth; widespread growth.

Appendix C: Africa-Related Commitments by Issue Area, 2008–2016

	Total	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou
Macroeconomic policy	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Labour/ Employment	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Trade	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Reform of international financial institutions	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social policy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
International taxation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Health	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Climate Change		0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
Development	16	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	5	4
Food and agriculture	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G7/G8/G20 governance	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	0	2	3	1	2	5	5	3	3	5	5

Appendix D: G20 Commitments by Core Issue Area, 2008–2016

	Total	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou
Macroeconomic policy	403	6	15	28	14	29	91	71	66	34	21	28
Financial regulation	271	59	45	23	12	24	38	18	20	7	8	17
Development	193	4	15	9	8	22	17	10	50	20	20	18
Trade	133	5	14	6	9	17	15	10	12	9	14	22
Reform of international financial institutions	120	14	29	11	4	16	22	8	5	4	2	5
Energy	106	0	0	17	1	14	18	10	19	16	3	8
Employment/Labour	100	0	4	3	0	4	8	18	29	16	10	8
Democracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accountability	80	4	3	15	3	4	5	13	9	17	2	5
Crime and corruption	78	3	0	3	3	9	5	7	33	4	4	7
Food and agriculture	64	0	0	3	2	2	36	4	11	0	3	3
Climate change	53	0	3	3	3	8	8	5	11	7	3	2
Information and communications technologies	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	47
G7/G8/G20 governance	39	0	0	3	0	2	12	3	12	0	0	7
Health	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	2	3
Infrastructure	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	8
Terrorism	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	12	3
Social policy	13	0	1	1	2	1	3	1	0	0	3	1
Microeconomics	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	2
Taxation	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Gender	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0
Environment	5	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0
Education	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Migration and refugees	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
Investment	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1,836	95	129	128	61	153	282	180	281	205	113	209

Appendix E: Development of Global Governance — Africa, 2008–2016

	Total	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou
		Inside										
High Level Panel for Infrastructure Investment	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sokoni Africa Infrastructure Marketplace	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Development Working Group	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
G20 Study Group on Climate Finance	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
AgResults Initiative	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Inside Total	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0
		Outside										
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Development Association	4	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
African Development Fund	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Nations	8	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	2
World Bank	6	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
International Development Agency	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Monetary Fund	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
International Finance Corporation	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian Infrastructure Financing Initiative	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian Development Bank	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Total	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou
International Fund for Agriculture and Development	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World Food Programme	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter American Development Bank	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food and Agriculture Organization	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Partnership for Africa's Development	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
World Health Organization	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
African Water Facility	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Investment Climate Facility for Africa	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Nations Framework for Climate Change Control	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Association of Southeast Asian Nations +3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
African Union	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conference to the Parties #17	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Conference to the Parties #18	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Conference to the Parties #19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Economic Community of West African States	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

	Total	2008 Washington	2009 London	2009 Pittsburgh	2010 Toronto	2010 Seoul	2011 Cannes	2012 Los Cabos	2013 St. Petersburg	2014 Brisbane	2015 Antalya	2016 Hangzhou
Infrastructure Consortium for Africa	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
World Trade Organization's Integrated Trade Information Portal	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
African Development Bank	5	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
World Trade Organization	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Outside Total	79	0	4	13	12	9	9	3	9	6	0	14
Overall Total	84	0	4	13	12	9	11	5	10	6	0	14
Ratio	5.79	0	0:4	0:13	0:12	0:10	1:5	2:3	1:9	0:6	0	0:14

Notes: The unit of analysis is the paragraph.