

Background on efforts towards founding an International Panel on Inequality

September 2026

Summary

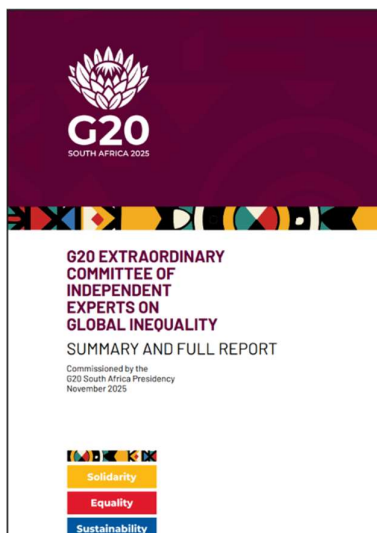
This background document explains the evolution of the proposal for an International Panel for Inequality (IPI) – and the work to establish it, that is being advanced by a Founding Committee chaired by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz, and composed of the governments of Brazil, Norway, South Africa and Spain, and notable experts. The IPI is the key recommendation from the report to the G20 by the [Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Inequality](#). Concrete steps are underway in 2026 to advance design efforts and launch the Panel.

Part One: The Extraordinary Committee on Global Inequality, its recommendations and reception.

The Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Inequality (G20 ExtComm), led by Joseph E. Stiglitz and comprising five other leading economists and experts, delivered the first comprehensive G20 report on global inequality. The [report](#) concludes that the world is facing an “inequality emergency” akin to a climate crisis — with very serious economic, social and political consequences.

Using data from the World Inequality Lab, the committee found that between 2000 and 2024, the richest 1 % of the global population captured 41 % of all new wealth, while the bottom 50 % saw their wealth increase by just 1 % in the same period. The report also highlights that 83 % of countries, representing about 90 % of the world’s population, meet the World Bank’s definition of high inequality, and that highly unequal societies are far more likely to experience democratic decline and political instability.

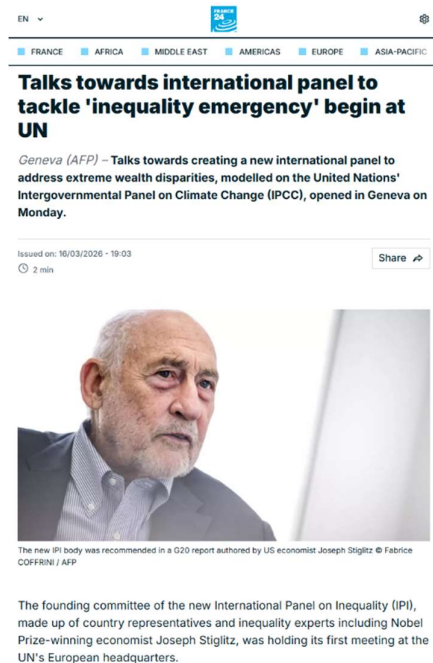
Using new data from the GC Wealth Project the committee identifies accumulated and



inherited wealth — with an estimated \$70 trillion expected to be passed on over the next decade — as a key driver entrenching inequality and undermining social mobility, fairness, and opportunity for lower-income populations. Global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, trade disruptions, rising debt and food insecurity have compounded these trends, creating what the committee described as a “perfect storm” that intensifies poverty and inequality.

Main recommendations centre on the need for stronger global cooperation and evidence-based policy tools:

- **Establish an International Panel on Inequality**, inspired by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



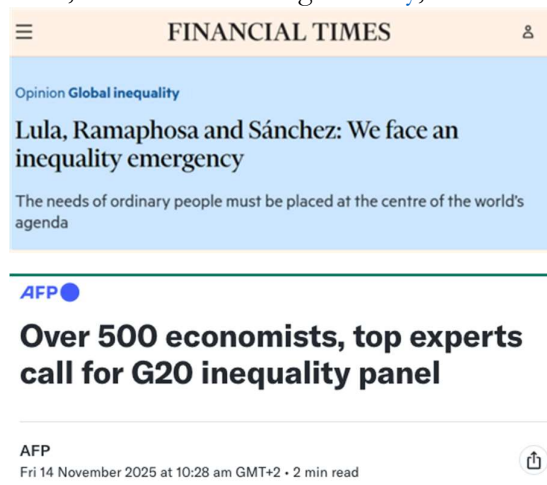
(IPCC), to systematically monitor inequality trends, assess drivers and consequences, and evaluate policy responses at global and national levels.

- **Reform international economic rules**, including taxation of multinational corporations and ultra-wealthy individuals, and intellectual property frameworks.
- **National action**, including exploring the roles of pro-worker regulation, reducing corporate concentration, and investing in public services, and more progressive tax and expenditure policies, potentially as part of National Inequality Reduction Plans, that would set timebound targets to reduce inequality levels.

The report emphasises that without such global coordination and political will, rising inequality not only undermines shared prosperity but threatens democratic governance and economic stability worldwide.

Report reception and support for findings

The G20 ExtComm launched its report which was then presented to world leaders, in November 2025. The ExtComm's primary recommendation – an IPI – gained political support. South Africa, Brazil and Spain declared their support ([in the Financial Times](#)). At the Summit itself, countries including [Norway](#), as well as [the European Council](#) and the [African Union](#) (and



a [meeting of African leaders](#) organized on the sidelines of the G20 summit) gave support. A number of other governments provided support to the report and engaged on its recommendations.

At the multilateral level, a number of bodies indicated support from an early stage. This includes the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank as well as the ILO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNU-WIDER, UNRISD and UNWOMEN.

Academic institutions that declared their willingness to support the IPI include the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, the London School of Economics, the World Inequality Lab at the Paris School of Economics and many others. This follows a letter of support from over 700 economists and other experts worldwide, which also offered support.

It is worth noting that the G20 ExtComm and IPI has received significant coverage in the media, stemming over 600 news items in 75 countries, and as a result has entered the public debate. The Guardian, in an editorial, [provided support](#) to an IPI.

Part Two: The process for establishing an International Panel on Inequality in 2026

Founding Committee for an IPI

The IPI Founding Committee is the premier decision-making body that deliberates on all aspects for the creation of an IPI. It coordinates inputs from other governments, multilateral agencies, academia and civil society. It is comprised of the original G20 ExtComm as well as key champion governments.

Expert members:

(Chair) Professor Joseph Stiglitz (USA): a Nobel laureate in economics, university professor at Columbia University and chief economist of the Roosevelt Institute.

Dr Adriana E. Abdenur (Brazil): a Brazilian social scientist, former Special Advisor in International Affairs in the office of President Lula of Brazil, co-founder of the Brazilian think tank Plataforma CIPÓ, and current co-President of the Global Fund for a New Economy.

Ms Winnie Byanyima (Uganda): Executive Director of UNAIDS and an Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Convenor of the Global Council on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics, and co-founder and co-chair of the People's Medicines Alliance.

Professor Jayati Ghosh (India): Professor, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Co-Chair, International Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

Professor Imraan Valodia (South Africa): Professor of Economics, Pro Vice-Chancellor: Climate, Sustainability and Inequality, and Director of the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, University of the Witwatersrand (WITS).

Professor Wanga Zembe-Mkabile (South Africa): Senior Specialist Scientist in the Health Systems Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council, and an Extraordinary Professor at the UWC School of Public Health.

Government members:

Zane Dangor, Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), and G20 Sherpa, South Africa.

Ambassador Mauricio Lyrio, Secretary for Climate, Energy and the Environment, former G20 Sherpa, Brazil.

Henrik Harboe, G20 Sherpa, Norway

Manuel de la Rocha, Director of the Bureau of Economic Affairs and G20 and Chief Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of Spain.

Key Milestones: The Roadmap to the IPI

There have been **four key moments** in the creation of the IPI to date, alongside **public moments** to build support, with one high level event next to follow at UNGA.



1. ***First IPI Founding Committee Meeting – Discuss and Agree IPI Governance – Geneva, March 16th 2026.*** The Founding Committee held its first face to face meeting in Geneva, and also took evidence from various experts, from comparable panels like the IPCC, from academic institutions and from multilateral agencies. Decisions were taken on the proposed structure and governance structure for the IPI. A public [event](#) was also held at the UN, which was widely covered by the global [media](#).

- 2. *Second IPI Founding Committee meeting - Discuss and propose work focus of IPI – Johannesburg, April 24th and 25th 2026.*** The second meeting of the IPI Founding Committee was held in Johannesburg – including a public meeting which was addressed by President Ramaphosa and by the UN Secretary General. It brought together 40 leading inequality academics from across the world to discuss the provisional work programme for the International Panel on Inequality.



- 3. *Third IPI Founding Committee meeting – Further develop and agree governance and other arrangements for the IPI – Barcelona July 6th 2026.***

The Founding Committee was hosted by the city of Barcelona for its fourth face to face meeting. Key decisions were made at this meeting, providing some of the remaining key propositions, including proposing where in the UN the IPI should sit.



4. *UN High Level Political Forum- New York, July 15th 2026.* At HLPF a high-level briefing was hosted by the four founding governments at the Norwegian Permanent Mission. It was attended by the Deputy Secretary General, several Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Ambassadors and other senior representatives of 20 Member States, alongside UN agencies and other key stakeholders.



The next major milestone:

5. *High Level Event in support of the IPI at UNGA – New York, 23rd September 2026.* The four founding governments have invited all member states to a high level event, where a growing group of member states can come together on the International Panel on Inequality. Member states have also been asked to consider signing up to a non-binding vision statement on the IPI, and to join the four governments in a group of countries working together to establish the panel, including through support for a resolution at the UN General Assembly.

Some key outcomes and decisions to date in the proposals for an IPI

The Founding Committee agreed the proposed purpose of the IPI: *Produce periodic assessments on the nature, causes and consequences of income and wealth inequality within and across countries and their structural relationship with other inequalities along dimensions such as employment, voice, access to justice, opportunity, basic needs, health and education, climate breakdown, and also their relationship with intersectional, multi-dimensional inequality across various categories, including race, gender, social class, ethnicity and geography. The IPI will also then produce assessments of the inequality consequences (in all the relevant dimensions) of existing and proposed policies.*

The Founding Committee also agreed on a number of other key proposals including as follows. These are detailed in a formal concept note that provides proposals, that can be accessed.

- The IPI would be made up of 40 inequality experts.
- The IPI will be led by a very small secretariat, based in the UN system.
- Workstreams would be led jointly by academics from south and north.
- Diversity is important: of geography, gender, age, but also discipline and economic breadth.
- The exact number of workstreams would be determined by the panel but would aim to be around four.
- That in designing the IPI there will be an uncompromising commitment to academic independence and credibility.
- The IPI will produce a main report every three years, and additional other reports as needed.
- That efforts will also be made to ensure the governance, process and administration of the IPI be designed to maximise impact with policy makers and the public.
- It is proposed that the UN University will be requested to initially host the IPI. It is proposed that the IPI will be standalone, with its own governance board, made up of a supermajority of governments, alongside leading inequality academics.
- Support will be sought to secure a UN General Assembly resolution which would support the establishment of and welcome the IPI in the context of Member States' efforts to address inequality.

Momentum

Momentum is growing behind the IPI in a wide range of **crucial global, regional and national forums**, with the championing of Founding Committee members.

The [first of these was at the African Union summit in February where South Africa sponsored a resolution which was passed](#) in support of the findings of the G20 report, and in support of the key recommendation of setting up an International Panel on Inequality.



The [declaration](#) of the Democracy Summit in Barcelona, Spain, attended by many other leaders from countries such as Mexico, Germany, and Australia contained language supporting the idea of the IPI in April. A forum hosted by President Sanchez of Spain with the Committee and other inequality experts in Madrid took place in February.

The **UN Secretary General** has provided his support to the establishment of the IPI, and (by video address) provided remarks at the Johannesburg meeting of the IPI.

Most recently in September 2026: the [leaders communique](#) of the **BRICS summit** in New Delhi agreed language that took note of the proposals to establish an IPI. Meanwhile, **38 former heads of State and Government urged current leaders** to back an IPI, calling it “a most vital institutional response for our time”. Now, **more than 1500 inequality academics and experts** have signed a [new letter](#) urging world leaders to endorse an IPI.

What is now needed

The Founding Committee governments are working to build support for establishing the IPI, and welcoming inputs on its work. Member States been invited to participate at a UNGA High-Level event on the IPI on the 23rd of September 2026 to provide inputs to an IPI, and been provided with a ‘Vision statement’ to express their support to the IPI. They have also been asked to consider joining the four governments in a growing group of member states that will work to support the establishment of the IPI, including through a resolution at the UN General Assembly. Outreach at many levels is being carried out to encourage member states to support and participate in the establishment of an IPI.



Central to this momentum-building moment is also the continued strong and sustained support from inequality experts and economists, and civil society across the world, with various actions underway at national and global levels to show support. For example, academics in the UK [sent](#) an open letter to the Prime Minister calling on him to support the IPI, and similar letters are being published in other member states. The Committee continues to

welcome support from inequality advocates to champion the need for the panel, building upon the Johannesburg meeting and other key moments to date.

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