

ADVERTISING FEATURE

B20 SA shines spotlight on food systems and industrial resilience

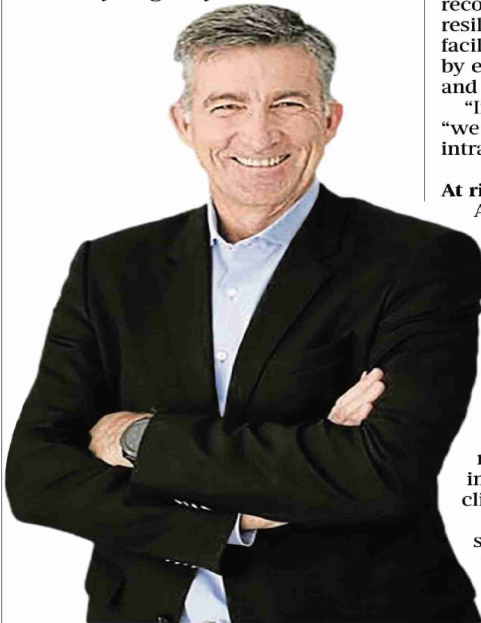
Last month's B20 SA virtual round table highlighted the urgent need for global action on food systems, industrial resilience and inclusive trade as business leaders and task force chairs warned of rising economic and environmental fragility under SA's G20 presidency.

Hosted by B20 Sherpa Cas Coovadia, the briefing brought together Debra Mallowah, chair of the Sustainable Food Systems and Agriculture Task Force, and Andrew Kirby, chair of the Industrial Transformation and Innovation Task Force, to unveil early recommendations ahead of the final B20 recommendations due in September.

A broken value chain

"Food systems are at breaking point," said Mallowah, head of Africa at Bayer.

"In just three years, global food insecurity surged by 150% while



Andrew Kirby

We must revive manufacturing to close infrastructure gaps, generate employment, and future-proof our economies.

productivity in agriculture has stagnated. Without co-ordinated action, we face deeper hunger, rising volatility and irreversible environmental degradation."

Mallowah called on G20 leaders to prioritise investment in regional food systems, improve access to digital and climate-smart technologies and unlock intra-African trade.

"This is our moment to act. We must turn agriculture into an engine of resilience and inclusive growth – starting with smallholders, women and youth."

The Task Force's five recommendations span supply chain resilience, sustainable farming, trade facilitation and financial access backed by enablers such as blended finance and digital innovation.

"If we get this right," Mallowah said, "we could unlock up to \$180bn in intra-African agricultural trade."

At risk of a permanent divide

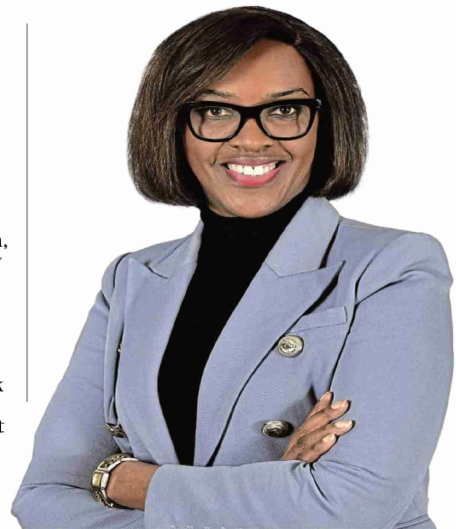
Andrew Kirby, CEO of Toyota SA, warned that manufacturing sectors, especially in low- and middle-income countries, are under pressure.

"Since 2019, manufacturing value added has declined by more than 10% in many emerging economies. Without a bold shift, we risk a two-speed global economy."

Kirby stressed that reindustrialisation must be inclusive, technology enabled and climate conscious.

"We need new models that support SMEs, embed industry 4.0 technologies, and build regional value chains.

"The alternative is stalled growth, deepening inequality and greater exposure to global shocks."



Debra Mallowah

He added that while services have supported urban inclusion, they cannot create industrial jobs at scale.

"We must revive manufacturing to close infrastructure gaps, generate employment and future-proof our economies."

Africa must lead, not just participate

Coovadia closed the discussion with a call to leadership: "This is not just SA's G20 moment. It is Africa's opportunity to shape global policy. Whether it's food, trade or industry fragmentation is not a strategy. Co-ordination is."

He emphasised that task force recommendations must translate into tangible reforms: "We don't need new declarations, we need delivery. It is not business unusual. We need business with purpose.

"But we need policy coherence, capital mobilisation and courageous leadership to move from ambition to action."

The recommendations discussed will feed into the final policy package to be delivered to the G20 presidency in early September, ahead of the B20 SA summit in Johannesburg November.