



We the 99 are rising

The People's Summit for Global Economic Justice 2025

A new economy is possible

We the 99 are people who feed, care for and build the world. We have solutions to create just and fairer economies, free from exploitative debt, extractivism and capture.

We are queer, trans, Black, Brown and Indigenous people from every corner of the earth being derailed by centuries of theft and exploitation; but we remain hopeful. From Soweto to São Paulo, Manila to Mombasa, Cairo to Kingston, We the 99% are rising, marching, organising, teaching, dreaming - and refusing to stay silent.



**We are
many.
They
are few.**



Participating countries

Botswana	Honduras	Peru
Brazil	India	Philippines
Burkina Faso	Indonesia	South Africa
Cameroon	Japan	South Sudan
Colombia	Kenya	Sri Lanka
Côte d'Ivoire	Madagascar	Taiwan
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Malawi	Tanzania
Ecuador	Malaysia	Thailand
Eswatini	Mexico	Uganda
Germany	Namibia	UK
Ghana	Nepal	USA
	Nigeria	Zambia
	Pakistan	Zimbabwe



People's Assemblies were held in

Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Ecuador, Eswatini, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Phillipines, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Zimbabwe

the 99%



Johannesburg, South Africa's city of gold, shone especially bright in November 2025.

Hundreds of its ubiquitous potholes were filled. Long-broken street lights were repaired and relit. Road markings on major roads received a fresh coat of paint.

The G20 had come to town.

Leaders from 18 of the world's most powerful nations, as well as representatives of the African Union and the European Union, gathered behind closed doors at the Johannesburg Expo Centre to "find solutions to global economic and financial issues". (The 19th member nation, the United States, boycotted the event, which was the first G20 Leadership Summit to be held on the African continent.) Collectively, the members of the G20 account for 80% of the world's Gross Domestic Product.

Just 15km away in Braamfontein, close to the city centre, a powerhouse of a different kind was taking shape. For three days, the historic Constitution Hill complex became a space for those unafraid to dream of and work for a future steeped in justice, fairness, collectivism and care.

Constitution Hill is a site with a complex history. Once a colonial fort securing European settler control of South Africa's vast gold reserves, and then a brutal prison where liberation fighters were held, it is now the seat of the Constitutional Court, and stands as a living monument to South Africa's part in the ongoing global struggle against imperialism and the human rights abuses it perpetuates.

The People's Summit for Global Economic Justice, under the banner of We the 99, brought together more than 5,000 people from across the Global South who share a vision of a world built for the Global Majority.

This vision cannot be achieved without a global movement – one that builds power from the ground up by connecting local struggles, uniting movements, and advancing clear political and economic alternatives based on justice, care, sustainability and dignity. We cannot succeed without global solidarity and sustained action.

A single event is no substitute for a long-term movement. The People's Summit was the culmination of six months of concerted mobilisation and consensus-building in 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. It was an important milestone in the formation of the We the 99 platform, offering a chance to consolidate the vision of the collective and to set an agenda.

We the 99
and the People's
Summit were co-
convened by Fight
Inequality Alliance,
Mobilize and New
Economy Hub.

As **convenors, we have sought to be accountable, humble and genuinely collaborative. In keeping with that spirit, this report will not be a dry recounting of the facts.**

A number of participants generously agreed to be interviewed about their experiences of both the lead-up to the People's Summit and the event itself. They reflected on both the good and the bad – and crucially, each offered thoughtful, practical suggestions for what could be done differently as the platform continues to gain momentum.

Several members of the organising team were interviewed too; we hope that their insights will be useful for others working in movement-building spaces.

The G20 Summit ended on 23 November 2025. The organisers deemed it a success, hailing the declaration adopted by delegates the previous day as “revolutionary” for Africa and the Global South more broadly. And then the powerful and privileged were ferried to OR Tambo International Airport in convoys of luxury cars, led by police escorts. Their work was done.

Our work is just beginning.

20

countries
hosted People's
Assemblies
or town halls
leading up to the
People's Summit

37+

countries represented
at the People's Summit

organisations signed up

42

languages spoken by participants

300+

17.6

million
people
reached

5,000+

People's Summit participants



Interview with Sekoetlane Phamodi, Director, New Economy Hub

Meeting this moment

The G20 is a government-to-government platform; it is states talking to each other. The members leverage their own capabilities and priorities in order to contest with each other - individually, collectively, against each other or with other blocs - to shape outcomes.

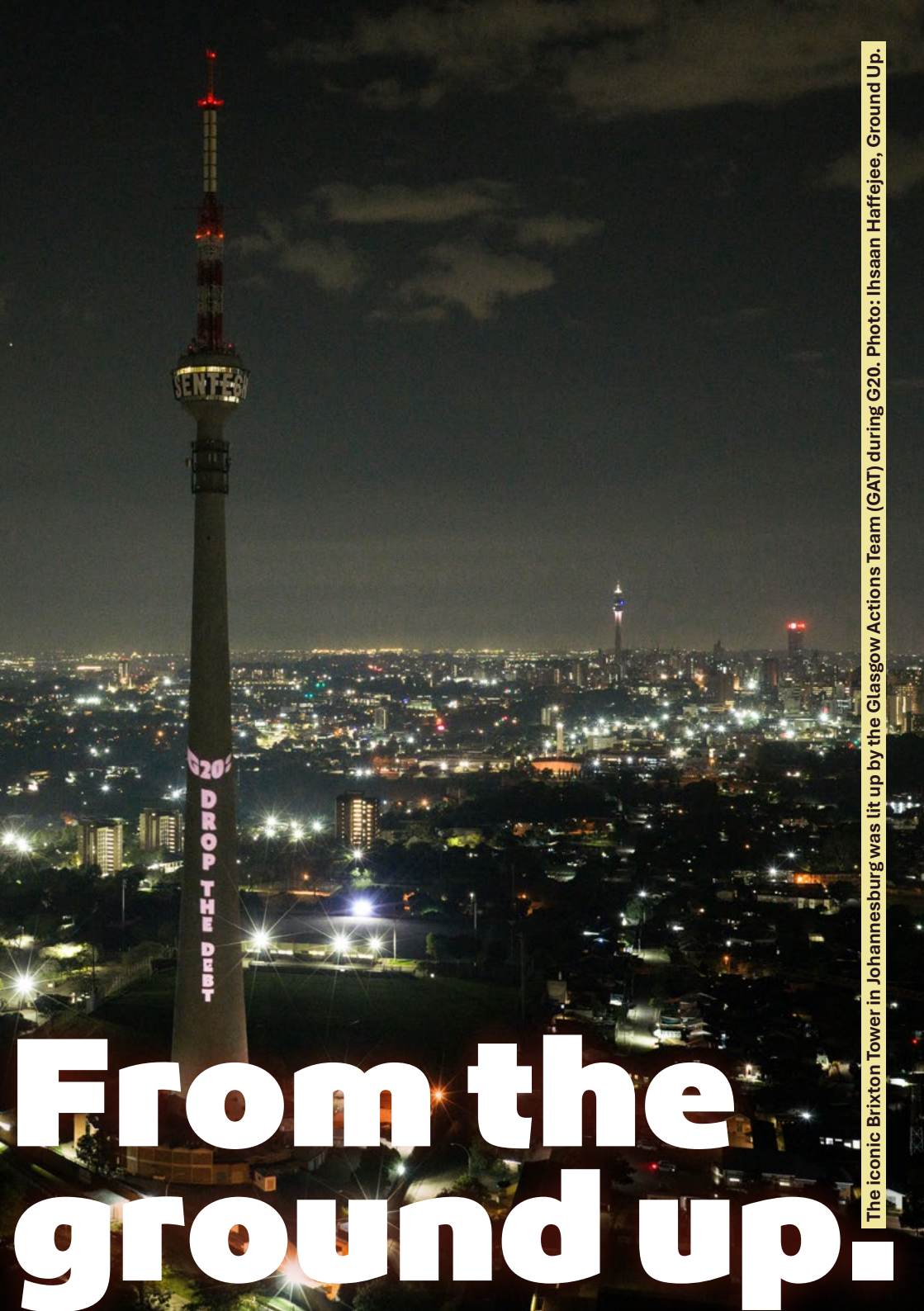
So, here is the G20, this powerful platform – with an agenda that does not reflect how ordinary people experience global capitalism. We're in a global cost-of-living crisis. One after another, African countries are reporting fiscal and solvency crises that are structural for them and other developing economies, but not for the rich world; because of a global financial architecture that was built for the global minority, but capitalised by the many. This has created an underdevelopment crisis that is only deepening; and when it converges with the climate crisis, it has cascading effects.

There are very few entry points for outsiders and non-state actors – apart from the private sector, since the summit is about organising global capitalism.

In 2024 we started talking to others in civil society about how to use the G20 Summit as a leverage point for what we want both here and internationally. At our earliest convening, the overwhelming mandate was to foreground the issues that matter most to people: bread, energy and water.

The idea of a People's Summit to coincide with the G20 meeting was not new; formations of social movements and other groups in India, Indonesia and Brazil organised these when their countries hosted the G20, and intended to do the same in South Africa.

Over time, an increasing number of groups recognised that our pathways were leading to the same place: we wanted to go all in on the outsider game while also using entry points and access we had in the insider space to really build.



From the ground up.

The iconic Brixton Tower in Johannesburg was lit up by the Glasgow Actions Team (GAT) during G20. Photo: Ihsaan Haffjee, Ground Up.

2024

Initial discussions about how to organise around the G20

Nov 2024

Engage with insider and outsider tracks at Brazil's G20

June 2025

Town halls in South Africa start

Sept-Nov 2025

People's Assemblies in 20 countries

20-22 Nov 2025

People's Summit

2028

Generational convening of We the 99 movement

But to do that – and to go all-in with partners in civil society who wanted to do the same – we needed clarity. How should we build a platform to engage with the voices of civil society and bring visibility to the reasons why we need to accelerate the work around the issues identified as most pressing by the South Africa's Presidency of the G20? It had to be a deeper and more honest expression of the nature and causes of these problems. It needed to respond structurally and systematically rather than just travelling from G20 to G20.

Each of our organisations, and the experience we have, tell us – and it's a universal sentiment – that the world is not doing well right now. Donald Trump's return to power in 2024 and the interests he represents really shook the international community. So many resources, so much volunteered effort went towards fighting populist authoritarian narratives; but those narratives won out.

It became clear that we must reorganise the way we organise before we talk about anything else.

We weren't trying to create new and heroic leaders who become a singular story representing a movement; we wanted to bring together a quite disparate set of civil society organisations – for them to remember how connected our struggles are, notwithstanding the distances between our homes and realities, and to cohere around our shared goals to contest and shape the contours of the [New International Economic Order](#) under construction.

Our timeline was extremely tight. Formal mobilisation events began in June 2025. There were benefits to working at that speed: we just had to get things done, and work with whoever was willing to work with us – a coalition of the willing. So we have comrades all over the world who want to arrive at a shared destination, even if we may disagree on the minutiae.



What we've learned

You have to build *with* people, not *for* them. Focus on the hyper-local level, because that's where civil society has genuine leverage and influence; and build in ways that connect that level to the wider world.

In this way we were able to lean into the breadth and depth of the resources that are available across civil society both locally and globally. Significantly, we were also able to build and expand our collective; organisations came out of this process with new allies and new knowledge bases. *This* is how you build power: through the intangibles and the relationships.

By then, the C20 (the G20's official engagement platform for civil society organisations) had become regarded as a closed and antagonistic space. It reflected how geopolitics is playing out, and we wanted to distinguish ourselves from that way of doing things. We recognised that we needed to construct whatever we were **creating from the ground up**, rather than pulling from the top down; multilateral processes such as those undertaken by the G20 aren't interested in that ground-up input. They aren't built for it. We needed to set the conditions for dialogue, reflection and problem-solving that didn't privilege platforms such as the G20, but people, as the centre of knowledge regarding how the world economy needs to change.

The civic ecosystem gets so stuck in this groove that we're in. Yes, big organisations are important, and we all have a role to play; but sometimes it seems as though chasing the platform has become the work itself, rather than the objectives we're trying to get the platform to address, and the outcomes we want it to produce.

Movement-building is like a **stokvel** [*a South African term for a community savings union*]. Everyone needs to put something into the bag to get out more than the sum of their parts when their turn comes along. This is solidarity in action, and that's what we're angling towards modelling. We have to connect as frequently as we can. To take stock. To learn. And to build. We are many; they are few. There are things each of us can do from where we are that can be supported and buttressed from elsewhere – all of it building towards our shared goal of global economic justice.





Making a move- ment

In the months leading up to the Summit, **People's Assemblies** were held in 20 countries and town halls were conducted in a 21st, South Africa, to share We the 99's call to action, to invite input, and to encourage organisations to get involved in the movement, participate in the Summit, or both.

An aerial photograph of a protest in Mexico City. A large white banner with red and black text is held up by a crowd of people. The banner reads: "CLAUDIA: NO QUEREMOS MILAGROS QUEREMOS IMPUESTOS A LOS MULTIMILLONARIOS". The background shows the city's architecture, including a large circular plaza and a building with a prominent archway. The text "CLAUDIA:" is in red, while the rest of the banner is in black. The words "IMPUESTOS A LOS" and "MULTIMILLONARIOS" are also in red.

CLAUDIA:
NO QUEREMOS
MILAGROS
QUEREMOS
IMPUESTOS A LOS
MULTIMILLONARIOS

**A red line
against
the 1%**

“The People’s Assemblies,

held in 20 countries across 3 continents from September to November, offered a place for people’s voices and solutions to be heard. Fight Inequality Alliance coordinated the National Assemblies as spaces to build awareness and collective power. Given the internationalist nature of We the 99 and the People’s Summit, they also provided an opportunity for participants’ voices to carry far beyond those rooms, and equipped them to enter the space in Johannesburg with comrades from all over the world.



Jenny Ricks, General Secretary, Fight Inequality Alliance



South Africa



Burkina Faso



Honduras



India



Nigeria



Mexico



“I first learned about We the 99 and the People’s Summit

through the Fight Inequality Alliance (FIA) Mexico political education platform.

I then attended one of the People’s Assemblies in Mexico – we heard from other movements about the work they’re doing that’s similar to ours in the debt abolition space, and learned about the ways those groups protect and use their resources. It was such a rich, nutritious experience.

Veronica Carrillo, Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt, Debt for Climate (Mexico) and Fight Inequality Alliance Mexico





Dream forward.

“The People’s Assembly was very valuable for me as a community mobiliser,

because it created space for national alliances. It helped us to shape the direction of the movement, to present our ideas and get a sense of how they connected to a broader global agenda. That planning phase gave me a real shared sense of purpose.

Martha Kikuta, community mobiliser, Fight Inequality Alliance Zambia



Kenya



Côte d'Ivoire



Eswatini



“In June 2025 we started actively organising the People’s Summit,

using it as a way to network South African organisations through bi-weekly town hall meetings that emphasised co-creation. We looked at what work was already being done, such as the Union Against Hunger’s work with the South African Human Rights Commission to set up a formal investigation* into the country’s food system, and explicitly connected that to We the 99 and issues within the global food system.

Ultimately, all the mobilisation revolved around this goal: we want to start building a more effective, collaborative, change-making movement.

David Lydall, Executive Director for Strategy, Mobilize

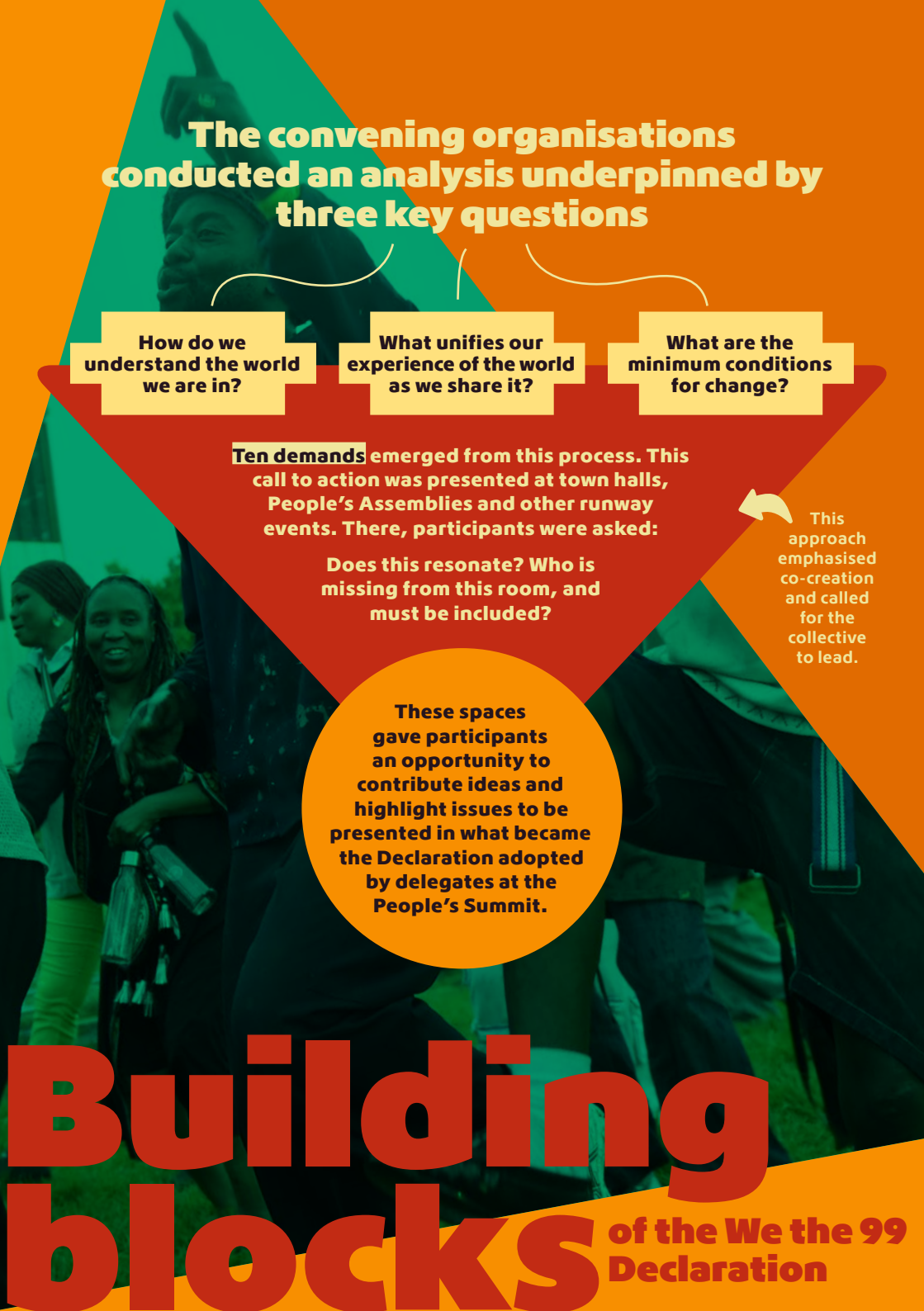
* The inquiry was held in March 2026.



IRABOWO,
A GREAT NATION
STANDS TALL
NEVER BOWINGZ
TO GLOBAL CAPITAL

WE THE
99

**Free
the land.**



The convening organisations conducted an analysis underpinned by three key questions

How do we understand the world we are in?

What unifies our experience of the world as we share it?

What are the minimum conditions for change?

Ten demands emerged from this process. This call to action was presented at town halls, People's Assemblies and other runway events. There, participants were asked:

Does this resonate? Who is missing from this room, and must be included?

This approach emphasised co-creation and called for the collective to lead.

These spaces gave participants an opportunity to contribute ideas and highlight issues to be presented in what became the Declaration adopted by delegates at the People's Summit.

Building blocks

of the We the 99 Declaration



Declaring our stance



What we've learned

Preparation for this kind of work, even on a short timeline, must not be overlooked or undervalued. People must be supported, and equipped with a strong understanding of the process and the purpose of producing a document such as this.

I was the convenor of the declaration process. Not the leader, more like someone who brought everyone together based on an agreed process.

The group consisted of colleagues from around the world; different movements, different geographies, all bringing **different skill sets** and lived experiences. At the start we signed a document that committed us to working collaboratively with the bigger picture in mind: not to focus on themes, but to take a more holistic view.

Our first task was to synthesise the inputs emerging from the 2024 People's Summit and People's Assemblies and similar gatherings organised in 2025; sometimes those were 20 pages each.

Those involved in the processes leading up to the People's Summit hold those words so close to their hearts, they don't want to lose anything, and you want to ensure that they know their inputs have been taken seriously.

My colleague Liz Medrano from Peru worked on the Spanish version of the document, and ultimately, we created a base document. During the Summit we focused on real-time data collection. The idea was to have rapporteurs taking notes at every session, but I knew it was possible that people who had volunteered wouldn't show up on the day; so we created a system for getting feedback and insights from different sessions ourselves, with the help of volunteers.

The volunteers, who hadn't signed up to be rapporteurs, literally saved the process – a mother and son who were at the event as general volunteers said they'd like to play this role, and they were extremely committed and passionate. They weren't activists – but they realised that they really needed to contribute to this process.

At the end of the first day we shared our work with the plenary. The draft was accepted, and we were mandated to produce a two-page declaration. No more, no less. And they were happy with what we presented to them.



What we've learned

The sometimes contested process of crafting and finalising the Declaration illustrates the ongoing challenges faced by civic organisers in order to build coherence in the body of movement actors who will lead the way.

We planned to present the draft declaration at the close of day 2. But at lunchtime, the Summit was temporarily shut down because of the influx of an unprecedented number of Women4Change demonstrators that the convenors hadn't planned for, flowing through the venue, and it wasn't clear whether the [99% Uprising] Festival would go ahead the next day.

Still, we wanted and needed to deliver on our mandate. I kept working on the draft; then a committee member who hadn't been around at all suddenly popped in and insisted that something had to be added. Some people didn't turn up when we did the final check. There was also some **last-minute unhappiness** about the wording around one point, expressed by people who had been given the opportunity to give inputs, but didn't until the very, very end. The convening group was reluctant to have us present the draft declaration at the Festival; they worried that we didn't have total consensus. We pushed back, but the organising group stood firm. We ended up not reading out the declaration, which was demoralising to the committee after all our hard work.

We had momentum and opportunity, and a reference for future movement-building. We had a great opportunity to juxtapose the G20 Leaders' declaration with ours (even if it wasn't final) – we missed that opportunity. The declaration was finalised through an online vetting process a few weeks after the Summit.

The declaration provides a summary of what this movement stands for: a comprehensive vision. The feedback I've received shows that the majority see themselves in it.



We the 99 declare

Manifesto for a new global economy



The full
Declaration can
be read in seven
languages [here](#).

- 1. Build a new system**
- 2. Tax the 1%**
- 3. Stop the theft**
- 4. Transform the debt system**
- 5. Enforce corporate accountability**
- 6. Invest in climate justice**
- 7. Recognise and redistribute care**
- 8. Secure food sovereignty**
- 9. Protect civic space and cultural rights**
- 10. End all forms of occupation and genocide**

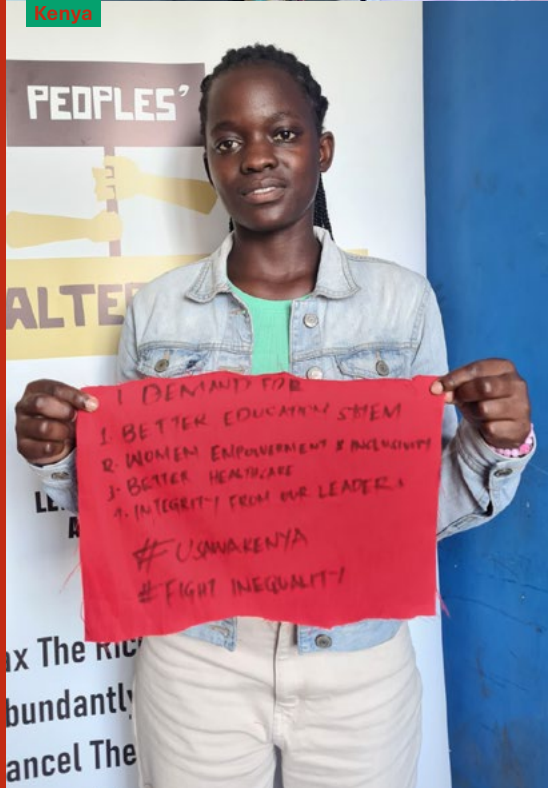
Indonesia



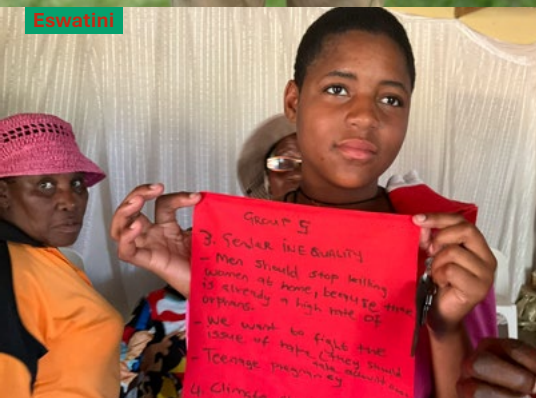
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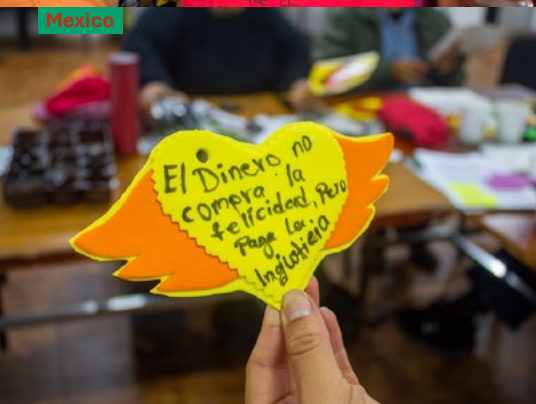
Kenya



Eswatini



Mexico



Zambia





**For
the
people
and
by the
people**

People's Summit, Johannesburg



People's Assembly, Kenya



People's Summit, Johannesburg



People power in action



Movement-building is an embodied discipline of dreaming the world we want into existence. It's not just talk, or a vehicle for expressing moral grievance with the people we disagree with.

It demands the whole self, not the managed one. It requires sitting with discomfort as a condition of learning, not as a problem to be resolved. It means participating in community, including communities not of our choosing, because it is only there that we discover our unlikeliest allies and the fullest measure of ourselves. It means staying open to what is unfolding right where we are.

Change is non-linear. It does not follow our plans. But it does reward our presence. Building the People's Summit was shaped by this understanding, drawn from the lived experiences and practice of movement-building across the communities and geographies we come from. What follows are some of the insights that emerged in the process that we hope will be carried by the body of We the 99 as we continue to build the platform.

Open doors event

People attending events at Constitution Hill may not realise that since late 2023, a large group of elderly people have made the space their home, in a political occupation of the Court Building.

That's because the group – members of the Khulumani Galela Reparation Movement, who are seeking justice and reparations for the apartheid state's crimes against them and their loved ones – is usually excluded from event spaces.

This was not the case at the People's Summit. Instead, the 70 occupiers were embraced into the body of what We the 99 are building. We opened a slot to them to present their story and share why they still demand reparations for apartheid and the crimes committed by the regime to sustain the brutal and dehumanising economic project of [racial capitalism](#) brought to our shores by European settler colonialism.

Naturally, they were afforded full access to all facilities for the duration of the three-day summit – water, bathrooms, meals, and visibility – in recognition of their humanity, and as an acknowledgement that the Summit was theirs, and that *they* are the 99%.



Photos: GroundUp

“**We have
been
sleeping
outside**



the Constitutional Court here for two years using cardboard, with no blankets, no food, no water, no toilets, because our government refused us access to the Court. We fought apartheid where our husbands, children, adults were kidnapped; some were brutally killed by the apartheid regime.

Our government had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and have promised reparations but the money only went to a few people. We say reparations now: if you can repair all the citizens and make sure they take part in rebuilding their country it makes the country and economy strong.

The People's Summit was so important for us because we saw we are not alone, or even just national; this has to be global...we are the 99% who have to work together to make our future.

**Noma-Russia Bonase, National Coordinator,
Khulamani Galela Reparations Movement**



<https://wetheninetynine.com/schedule/>



A diversity of approaches



What we've learned

Things don't have to be done a certain way just because that's the norm in civil society. There wasn't an endless run of panels at the Summit: instead, organisations were urged to use different formats and methodologies for their sessions.

And it's okay to cede control – as conveners, we provided the space, and participating organisations structured their own sessions.

“[The Summit] wasn't just a dialogue or a conference. People needed to be **very creative**. Ultimately, we were asking organisations to create accessible spaces: you want people to be able to walk into a tent, and immediately understand what's happening. There were many elderly people; they've got younger people at home, they should be able to go back and talk about what they saw and learned, easily.

The question for civil society is: Outside of frills and trinkets, how are you communicating your message? We need to sing the same song when calling for economic justice.

Kearabetwse Moopelo, Programme Coordinator, People's Summit & Programme Officer: Networks & Advocacy, New Economy Hub

The Summit offered an opportunity for people to learn from those doing similar work in different circumstances or geographies, as well as exposing participants to new ideas and emphasising the interconnectedness not just of the problems dogging the 99%, but also the ways we are connected to each other as organisers, mobilisers and activists.

Strengthening the narrative

“ The summit, and all the preparations before it, have inspired me a lot in moving forward with my personal and collective activism. I understood new angles that enable me to organise better, especially among the audience that we are working with, by providing them with the narrative of injustice and inequality that is being faced by every working Indonesian.

Efraim Leonard, Community Lead,
Bijak Memantau, Indonesia

A powerful experience

“ It felt weird leaving COP [COP30 was held in Belém, Brazil, just before the People's Summit] when there was still so much going on. Coming to South Africa and seeing what was going on, the power in the movement and all the people that attended, it was really cool! The People's Summit was really powerful in bringing the global community together in a very beautiful, South African way.

Amalen Sathananthar*, founder of
the Activist Network, Malaysia

** Amalen was interviewed by Saif Arbee as part of the Association for Women's Rights in Development's (AWID) Feminist Journalist Network.*

That's not to suggest the Summit was flawless. There were a number of learning moments. For instance, we provided a translation app for comrades who didn't speak English. However, this approach was hamstrung by an unstable Wi-Fi connection.

“Problems with the translation app were frustrating. Some training before the next big event might be useful: we could have comrades explaining key concepts in different languages, and create a glossary of terms so that everyone has basic words or phrases in their own language to help navigate discussions. I also think the programme could have been more detailed, offering short, simple summaries rather than just headlines. Many people speak at least some English but don't know technical terms in the language, so this simple explanation would really help with preparation and understanding.

Veronica Carrillo, Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt, Debt for Climate (Mexico) and Fight Inequality Alliance Mexico

When building a movement, it's inevitable that there will be shortcomings, frustrations and even outright failures. However, our experiences underscored that civil societies should not be afraid to try new approaches – and to be ambitious.

On the second day of the Summit, thousands of Women4Change demonstrators began streaming into the Constitution Hill complex through the single basement entrance we designated as a controlled access point for participants of this ticketed People's Summit.

The 99 coordinators needed to take action to counter two risks: a stampede, and a volatile encounter between demonstrators and police. Summit activities were suspended and we focused



on safely evacuating everyone on site and allowing protestors to pass safely through the complex.

South Africa's epidemic of sexual and gender-based violence is inseparable from the structural conditions the People's Summit was convened to contest. Such violence is not aberrant: it is systemic. So, when the 99% gathered, it made sense that an organisation like Women4Change would mobilise.

We had not, however, anticipated the scale, nor how it would lead to the suspension of the afternoon programme of the summit. The disruption disappointed organisers, afternoon programme convenors, participants, and vendors alike. But the decision was clear: our commitment remained to the security and personal safety of participants and demonstrators equally.

Our powerful mobilisations must carry a corresponding commitment to the safety and dignity of those it draws in, or it risks undermining the very values it advances. Well coordinated, disciplined campaigns are not a bureaucratic constraint on revolutionary energy - they are an expression of it. The 99% have a duty of care towards one another. We the 99 took this seriously as a commitment for ourselves, and to all those who gathered.

Momentum



The People's Summit was a milestone in a longer arc of organising that stretches back through generations of struggle — and forward to the work we still need to do. In the months since delegates left Johannesburg, the framing, the Declaration and the relationships forged at Constitution Hill have continued to shape how we think, organise and build — across borders and across movements.

“In the Fight Inequality Alliance, the framing of We the 99 is still embedded in our messaging, campaigning and political education work.

It's also been used in different media pieces, both in individual countries and globally, as has the Declaration. This is a good place from which to keep building the movement, foregrounding the Majority World as a leader and offering people an organising and narrative nexus they can use to join together across different silos in their communities – and across borders. In this era, in which the global economic order is being remade, we plan to build on this convening and turn it into a generational movement – with a key role to play, in the coming years, regarding how the economy can be transformed: for the people, by the people.

**Jenny Ricks, General Secretary,
Fight Inequality Alliance**



“At the Summit I learned from and about the work my comrades from other parts of the world are doing.

I facilitated a world café event where we discussed different debt stressors, and I found that there’s much more mobilisation in Africa around illegitimate debt than there is in Latin America, such as popular tribunals where people can talk about the issue. There’s real allyship – despite some differences in what underlies our issues, there’s so much connection; and I came away with the understanding that I am part of something bigger. I just [in April 2026] returned from a meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where I told everyone about We the 99 as something special and *muy importante* [very important]. We’ve really started something.

Veronica Carrillo, Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt, Debt for Climate (Mexico) and Fight Inequality Alliance Mexico

“ I think a regular check-in with fellow speakers and movement builders will be beneficial.

The WhatsApp group has been great at ensuring that we are connecting with one another, but without constant, collective activity, I think it's easy for the messages to get lost. I also think it's going to be beneficial for us to do some collective global campaigns!

Amalen Sathananthar*, founder of the Activist Network, Malaysia

“ One of the things I realised at the Summit

was that sometimes, you're not doing this work – this activism – for yourself; you're doing it for those who are coming after you. The tour of Constitution Hill taught me about the freedom fighters who sat in those cells. [The precinct is a former prison complex.] It's not a sprint, it's a marathon; and it will go on and on. We should be pushed – driven – by those who were there before us, and those who will come after.

Martha Kikuta, community mobiliser, Fight Inequality Alliance Zambia



Dignity.