

The G20 Leaders' Declaration emphasises the importance of agricultural growth in resolving global food insecurity

- The G20 leaders' Declaration placed an essential focus on agriculture, recognising the role the sector plays in strengthening global food security. On this, the G20 Leaders Declaration correctly states that: "We therefore reiterate our commitment to ensuring resilient and sustainable food systems and food security through open and non-discriminatory trade policies consistent with WTO rules."
- The Declaration further adds that: "We note that modernising agriculture and food system's resilience can be enhanced through land, soil biodiversity, energy and water management, reducing food waste, adaptation and mitigation, support for sustainable technologies, innovations and approaches and investment in smallholder and family farmers while promoting the inclusion and the empowerment of women and youth, strengthening local food production, resilient and improved food value chains..."
- This is a bold and welcome statement affirming commitments to the WTO rules in global agriculture. South Africa's agricultural sector is export-led, and the WTO plays an essential role in ensuring fairness in international trade. The fairness of global trade is also key to ensuring that the world can achieve food security through trade, amongst other interventions.
- Moreover, adaptation to climate change will require significant effort and coordination among the government, industry stakeholders, and research institutions. Over the years, South Africa has prioritised technological advancements, such as improved seed cultivars and animal genetics, as well as appropriate and safe applications of agrochemicals and fertilisers.
- While others have called for a drastic decrease in the use of agrichemicals, the South African government and organised agriculture have always emphasised appropriate and balanced application of agrochemicals in a safe manner for humans and the environment. We must be guided by science rather than rhetoric and politics on food matters. We take it that the G20 Leaders Declaration's focus on sustainable technologies and innovation encompasses such approaches as those of South Africa.
- Beyond South African agricultural matters, the G20 placed a necessary spotlight on the challenge of poverty, which remains a reality on the African continent. Unlocking agrarian productivity across the continent will help ensure we overcome this challenge. The gains from such won't be easy or achieved overnight, as they require reframing agriculture across the continent, with a necessary focus on commercial production while supporting smallholder farmers. The interventions also need improvement in land governance, the adoption of technology (improved seed cultivars and genetics), appropriate and safe use of agrochemicals and fertilisers, open trade and minimal government intervention, investment in network infrastructure, and the embrace of organised agriculture, amongst other things. These are all lessons that can be drawn from South Africa's agricultural story for the good of the African continent.