



MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER NDABENI APPOINTS MR VUYANI JARANA AS CHAIRPERSON OF STARTUP20 FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY, WITH 22 ON SLOANE AS SECRETARIAT

The Minister of Small Business Development, Ms. Stella Tembisa Ndabeni, is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Vuyani Jarana as Chairperson and 22 On Sloane as Secretariat of the Startup20 Engagement Group for South Africa's G20 Presidency in 2025.

A meeting was convened on the 07th of March 2025 consisting of more than 75 of South Africa's leading start-up eco-system role-players where the Chairperson and secretariat were introduced.

Mr. Jarana brings a wealth of experience to this crucial role, with more than 25 years of leadership in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. A seasoned business transformation leader, Mr. Jarana previously served as Group Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer of Vodacom Business within the Vodacom Group. He also held the role of Chief Executive Officer of South African Airways, where he spearheaded critical restructuring efforts.

Currently, Mr. Jarana is the Founder and CEO of Ilitha Telecommunications, a company dedicated to delivering superfast, affordable broadband to underserved peri-urban and rural communities. He currently serves as Chairperson of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), a key institution driving South Africa's scientific, industrial, and technological innovation agenda.

Mr. Jarana's appointment is a timely step as South Africa assumes the G20 Presidency and seeks to elevate Africa's voice in global economic governance.

South Africa took over the G20 Presidency following the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (18–19 November 2024). As the only African permanent member of the G20, South Africa views the Presidency as a powerful platform to advance the continent's development priorities. The G20, comprising 19 nations, the European Union, and the African Union, plays a central role in driving multilateral cooperation to boost the global economy, promote sustainable growth, and address shared international challenges.

In this context, the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) has been entrusted with leading South Africa's Startup20 Engagement Group, one of the officially recognized G20 Engagement Groups, during its Presidency. Startup20 advocates for startups and MSMEs at the G20 level, developing policy recommendations to advance the global startup ecosystem and foster inclusive innovation.



To support this effort, 22 On Sloane has been appointed as the Country Secretariat for Startup20 during South Africa's G20 Presidency. 22 On Sloane is Africa's largest startup campus, playing a pivotal role in advancing the startup and MSME ecosystem across the continent. 22 On Sloane serves as headquarters for the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) Africa, which is represented in 43 African countries, and as the country headquarters of GEN Global which has a presence in 180 countries globally aimed at supporting entrepreneurs to start and scale.

As Secretariat, 22 On Sloane will support Mr Jarana to coordinate and manage all Startup20 activities in South Africa, including stakeholder engagements, task force operations, international collaboration efforts, policy drafting, and logistical delivery of the Startup20 agenda. The organisation will also facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues and policy consultations to ensure that Africa's entrepreneurial voice is firmly embedded in the ensuing global conversations.

As Chairperson, Mr. Jarana will lead Startup20's strategic direction, appoint task force chairs, coordinate high-level meetings and events, and guide the development of the Startup20 Policy Communiqué, which will contribute to the official G20 Leaders' Declaration.

Minister Ndabeni expressed her full confidence in Mr. Jarana's leadership, stating: "We are delighted to welcome Mr. Jarana as the Chairperson of the Startup20 Engagement Group. His extensive experience and expertise will be invaluable in driving our efforts to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in Africa. He is a respected and seasoned business leader whom I am confident will lead the Startup20 Engagement Group with dedication and focus, ensuring that this serves as a legacy for our country and the ecosystem."

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