

Business 20 group warns of constrained economic outlook as South African citrus industry navigates trade challenges

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 23 September 2025

The Business 20 group has highlighted mounting challenges in global trade due to geopolitical tensions, as Boitshoko Ntshabele of the CGA calls for stability and improved market access through pragmatic reform



Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele

Influential G20 engagement group Business 20 (B20) has highlighted that the global trade environment has become challenging due to geopolitical tensions.

Prospects for economic growth at a global level have been revised downward due to the constrained outlook.

The verdict came after B20 negotiations, which serve as the G20 dialogue forum for global business.

Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the South African Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), participated in the discussions, and noted that three key recommendations emerged from the meeting.

"The meeting concluded that promoting stability in global trade and improved market access through de-escalation of recent trade actions and pragmatic reform, establishing a new trade and investment deal for Africa, and building a climate-responsive system for international trade and investment, emerged as the clear discussion points to be taken to the G-20," he outlined.

"The recommendation of promoting stability in global trade and improving market access is quite appropriate and timely for us as the CGA."

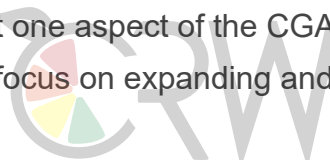
Observers noted that with these recommendations the interests of agriculture and trade have been placed on the highest agendas as never before.

Ntshabele said the CGA is pleased with the current export season and the increase in volumes that has been achieved.

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"This bodes well for the achievement of our targets," he confirmed.

Increasing volumes are, however, just one aspect of the CGA's objectives. The other is to find markets for new fruit. From there the focus on expanding and diversifying will follow.



The impact of the US tariff imposition has been minimised for the 2025 season, Ntshabele continued, as most of the fruit was shipped prior to the date that the reciprocal 30 per cent tariff eventually took effect.

"As an export industry, our growth is served best by a rules-based trading regime," he said. "Such an environment provides for a predictable situation and makes for easy planning and execution."

It is also encouraging that another recommendation is made to move towards achieving ambitious trade targets within and with Africa.

"It is recommended that a new trade and investment deal is created for the continent, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) should benefit from the conclusion of such an agreement," said Ntshabele.

"The future for African development looks highly promising based on a youth dividend and projected growth in population. As the CGA we need to position ourselves to benefit from this."

EUROFRUIT strategy towards Africa is concerned, while South Africa should appreciate the generosity that comes with the creation of a trade deal for Africa, it should heed the key lesson of the past year.

That is that unilateral trade agreements have limitations and are not stable, as the offer is subject to the whims of the party establishing it.

“The deals created should be based on equal partnerships,” he added.

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