



**Strengthening diplomatic and
political relations between
member states**



BRICS

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Forum: BRICS

Issue: Strengthening diplomatic and political relations between member states

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Introduction

Esteemed delegates,

In 2001, with the initial launching of BRIC (later BRICS after the 2010 South African succession), there were many criticisms. Many argued that BRIC nations were too inherently different, be it culturally, geopolitically, or economically to form a meaningful union. Despite all these fundamental differences BRICS nations have formed a strong alliance, convening annually and working together to tackle shared interests of global importance. All BRICS nations, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa share large markets with rapid economic growth. BRICS does not just convene for economic means, sharing joint positions in international forums such as the United Nations (UN) and G20. BRICS sheds light on the representation of the Global South, not a region often in the spotlight.

Worldwide, organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), and more are criticised for their Eurocentrism. Worldwide organisations goals should be to necessitate growth for all, however key organisations often face condemnation. This is why to many citizens of BRICS nations the league's collaboration is so important. Diplomacy is an essential instrument in the world of global politics. It serves as a tool for nations to achieve national and collective interests. Diplomacy between countries becomes increasingly important with the interdependence of nations, as can be seen in the example of many Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs). Diplomacy continues to evolve alongside the interdependence between countries.

BRICS nations follow principles of consensus and equality, emphasising decision-making through equal participation and mutual agreement, to recognise and emphasise sovereignty. The means of consensus highlight the non-intervention BRICS nations have for the internal matters of other BRICS

members, allowing the pursuit of development without external interference. This differs from many current-day Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs), making the ideas of consensus controversial. Many equate BRICS to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or the United Nations (UN), however, as of current the organisation has the headquarters, and deals with mainly economic issues. With expansionism however and a strong role in the global economy, more efforts must be taken to strengthen diplomatic and political relations between member states, which will be the topic of discussion for HMUN24.

General Overview

Annual Convening

As of 2023, BRICS has held 15 summits. These summits are held annually. Throughout the summits the main theme of discussion is economics, however discussions also focus on spheres of political and socio economic coordination for members (Hub). These discussions show a great level of interdependence between BRICS nations, in which member countries identify with each other's business, and economic opportunities and incentives to cooperate. When convening, the heads of state or government officials of each country convene to discuss topics of interest. The goals of this bloc can be traced back to its founding. BRICS was founded as an informal club to provide a platform for its members to challenge a world order dominated by the Global West.

The 15th BRICS summit, held in South Africa in August 2023 focused on the theme of 'BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism'. This theme follows a new BRICS priority, one viewed with praise. Helping the global south is often neglected, and the theme of the 15th BRICS summit shows that BRICS wants to help develop the African continent, in means of the quality of life such as education, sustainable development following the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and unlocking trade opportunities through the African continental Free Trade Area. Strengthening multilateralism was a large theme of the conference and South Africa's agenda, showing the growth between not only BRICS member states but BRICS nations and developing countries.

BRICS Development Plans

Despite different and competing interests, BRICS members pose a common vision of a greater role for the global south in developing the world. The group is guided by each member state government's national strategy, which leads to opportunities mapping off of economic success, yet challenges as the group navigates diverse interests. Yet, despite these complications and the controversy of member states such as China and Russia, BRICS retain their agency in the global world and continue to advance their agenda and interests. Currently, BRICS operates in tandem with G20, as in the upcoming years its presidency will move from India (2023) to Brazil (2024) and then to South Africa (2025). This shows that BRICS nations work within frameworks viewed as western, however it raises the question of whether BRICS can rely on G20 to help with their wanted reforms of critical international institutions including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

An important note is that the expanded BRICS, with six out of ten of the world's top oil producers provides an even greater global opportunity for the group to have global economic influence. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for members to diversify their partnerships, in terms of technology transfer and strengthening BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), as of current gold, has relatively little capital for financing projects compared to its predecessors the World Bank however, so for now the New Development Bank (NDB) struggles to compete. These are not the only challenges faced by BRICS, as discussions on expansion have occurred but have not been clarified. The European Union (EU) has a clearly defined criteria for new members, however what is the BRICS criteria for adding potential members? As BRICS is not a formal organisation with a headquarters, these discrepancies are understandable. However, in the case of expansion, the question will be raised for new BRICS institutions, clearer objectives, and criteria to the 40 global south countries who expressed interest in joining, outlining what they must do. Similarly, it is not clear what path BRICS members will take to advance their interdependence between new nations not on the same economic playing field.

The promotion of sustainable development and the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a key part of BRICS development plans. Leaders often advocate BRICS position in, "stability, sustainable development, and prosperity" in the world. In recent years South-South cooperation has become an important channel of fostering global communication, as underrepresented nations gain a seat at the table. A specific case can be seen with member state India, advocating for a development cooperation with Africa based on African countries development

priorities. Despite its lack of expansion the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) promotes this sustainable development, The bank's goals are to promote infrastructure and sustainable projects in emerging and developing countries. It follows the same formula as the World Bank, for the underrepresented. The NDBs decision making parameters can be seen as more democratic however, as regardless of a member nations economy each nation has equal voting rights. Additionally during the United Nations (UN) negotiations for developing the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development BRICS nations advocated for South-South cooperation.

According to Stimson, BRICS+ will now include the world's top ten oil producers, which together account for 30% of global oil output. Alongside this, member states such as China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil are top energy consumers. BRICS expansion will address a larger market, and have implications for energy trade. By fostering the harmonisation of interests, and creating a united negotiation front BRICS will grow their interdependence in terms of their expansion. As South African President Cyril Ramaphosa asserted during the 15th BRICS summit, "BRICS is an equal partnership of countries that have differing views but a shared vision for a better world."

Consensus Criticism

BRICS growing connections are not favourable for all and have been criticised. Amid Russia's 2014 invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, BRICS nations advocated for resolving the conflict through dialogue and did not support international sanctions. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the New Development Bank (NDB) was utilised to provide emergency funds to address the complications of the crisis. The NDB shows BRICS reach, as their dissatisfaction with global finance has transferred into a feasible counter. The NDB has approved 123 projects between 2016-22 mobilising over \$30 billion USD. It has an AA+ bond credit rating, (largely due to China's rating). However, despite advocating for project analysis agility, the resources of the NDB have come into question. The cooperative effort to establish the bank contrasts with nations' parallel strategies. China is a clear pointing force, as they have been in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), all with different objectives and funding methods from BRICS. As a leading member of BRICS, this begs the question of why China does not explore BRICS potential. BRICS nations follow a structure of consensus, which China views as a constraint. The BRICS structure itself does not impose any constraints or necessities on individual actions of its members,

therefore China's actions are understandable. However, as a nation state of BRICS, to explore the NDB's full potential China could follow BRICS funding missions.

The absence of a structure of contains and limitations has in some ways ensured the resilience of BRICS. The low institutionalisation of the group allows its members to reach consensus on common agendas. It also furthers cooperation, as states do not enter open debate without the theme of coordination. BRICS relies on the will of its members to maintain discussions on structure, and annual summits. The absence of rules, norms, and procedures however can challenge BRICS in terms of expansion. How can BRICS realistically let in 6 new members by the 1st of January 2024 without a formal framework guiding the decision. The choice of certain member states over others can cause diplomatic constraints for BRICS, in cooperation with each other but with other states. BRICS is recognized for bringing together emerging economies which differ heavily, and strives in this role with limited cohesion. Its expansion, justified at the end of its 15th Summit in Johannesburg on August 24th was deemed necessary to adapt the group to the contemporary global political situation, providing further diversification. After all, with this expansion, more representation will be heard from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle east.

Definition of Key Terms

Consensus

A general agreement among a group of people.

De-dollarization

Countries reduce reliance on the U.S. Dollar in foreign exchange, as a reserve, or within their finance.

Developing Countries

A country with a relatively low standard of living, lack of industrialization, and moderate to low human development.

Development

A sustained increase in the standard of living.

Diplomacy

An interactive two-way process between two countries aimed at achieving their respective foreign policies.

Expansion

The action of becoming more extensive or larger.

Global South

The nations of the world are regarded as having a relatively low level of economic and industrial development, typically located south of industrialised nations.

Global West

The Western world, also known as the global west, refers to various nations in the region of the Americas, Europe, and Oceania.

Imperialism

The act of extending a country's power and influence through military force, the economy, or in some cases colonisation.

Interdependence

The multi-reliance between nations to work towards shared interests be it economically, politically, etc..

International cooperation

All professional activities aimed at supporting economic, social, and cultural development around the globe.

Multilateralism

The process of organising relations between states in groups of three or more.

Sanctions

An action taken to make nations' governments obey a law or rule, by limiting their economic means.

Soft Power

The means of exerting power over cultural, humanitarian, development, and economic means.

Sovereignty

The ability of a state to rule itself. Defined by four distinct properties, defined borders, a permanent population, the ability for the government to enter in relations, and recognition from other states.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
16th of June 2009	First BRIC summit in Yekaterinburg
24th of December 2010	South Africa is admitted into BRIC, creating BRICS
20th of February 2014	The Russian Federation invades Crimea
24th of February 2022	The Russian special military operation in Ukraine
22nd - 24th of August	Fifteenth BRICS summit, in Sandton
1st of January 2024	New member states join BRICS, creating BRICS+

Major Parties Involved

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is currently the most controversial nation which is being discussed. That's why Russia's BRICS membership sparks some of the biggest controversies in global politics. First of all; the Russian invasion of Ukraine has sparked many debates among its own allies, including Brazil, with them having voted in favor of a Russian withdrawal from Ukraine during the General Assembly

vote. Overall, the relationship between BRICS members and Russia seems fairly stable. Brazil, however, does condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, stating their “concern” about the “global consequences”. The Russian Federation has contributed a lot to the BRICS alliance and thrives to continue economic prosperity and development for all member states, with Russia being open to new member states to create an economically stronger group than the G20

People’s Republic of China

China is the nation with the second highest GDP in the world, the United States being the first. The Chinese want to become the biggest economy in the world and that might happen with the accession of new member states. They already have a big trading front with Africa and Russia and they want to expand more into the Middle East. That will be possible when Saudi Arabia and the UAE join the new BRICS+. Overall, China has good relationships with the current BRICS members and continues to fortify its economic empire even more.

South Africa

The current BRICS president is Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of South Africa. He was responsible for the diplomatic immunity for Putin, so he wouldn’t get arrested by the ICC. Following that, South Africa has a neutral view of the Russo-Ukrainian war, not condemning Russia for their actions. South Africa strives to become one of the most influential and powerful nations in Africa and thanks to BRICS, the path to that goal will broaden even more.

Possible Solutions

Thanks to various controversies, the relationship between several member states has become tense, mainly thanks to Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine. One way to improve relationships is to create new legislation surrounding BRICS policy. Mainly to only focus on the economic aspects of the alliance and improve the development of economies.

Another way to strengthen relationships between member states is to try and find ways to make import and export taxes cheaper when products get shipped to each other, something like a free trade zone like the European Union is doing. This will help increase the economies of lesser

economically developed nations and will increase diplomatic relationships between member states. Each nation must be equally treated within the BRICS alliance, not so that more powerful nations such as China or Russia will have more to say during BRICS summits. The key to improving relationships is working together with each other and that will be possible when every nation is treated and listened to equally.

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