

5TH BRICS ACADEMIC FORUM

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 5TH BRICS SUMMIT, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, 2013

The 5th BRICS Academic Forum, comprising experts and scholars from the research and academic institutions of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, met on the 11th and 12th of March 2013 in Durban. Given that the BRICS have covered significant ground since the inception of the partnership five years' ago, the Forum believes that they must build upon the progress made in the first five-year cycle of BRICS by consolidating the agreements reached and the achievements registered and by making further concrete proposals for realising the unfolding objectives of the BRICS partnership.

The theme for this year's Forum, "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation", represents the common aspirations of BRICS for cementing partnerships with one another and with emerging markets and developing countries including the African continent in order to strengthen progressive development trajectories, promote integration, and expedite industrialisation in developing countries.

A shared desire for peace, security, development, cooperation, respect for International Law and sovereignty continues to serve as the fundamental principles for BRICS members in pursuit of a more equitable and fair world. These principles hold particularly in dealings with African countries, the sovereignty of many of which has not been respected in the past, especially by colonial powers.

The Forum believes that BRICS must continue to create synergies for enhancing economic growth through greater engagement with one another as well as with the rest of the world, particularly the African continent.

The BRICS Think Tank workshop of 8 and 9 March 2013 saw the establishment of the BRICS Think Tanks Council (BTTC), which provides the platform for the exchange of ideas among researchers, academia and think tanks and the convening of the BRICS Academic Forum. The BTTC agreed on a process for finalising the joint long-term vision document for BRICS on the basis of the Indian draft, with inputs from other BRICS countries, in pursuance of paragraph 17 of the Delhi Declaration.

The Forum discussed five themes, which generated the following recommendations:

1. BRICS and the Global Economy

BRICS should facilitate greater cooperation in the area of trade, especially in goods and services, towards strengthening partnerships for development and industrialisation. They

should engage in further discussions on the feasibility of implementing preferential trade agreements among themselves. In addition, BRICS should strengthen financial and development cooperation through the establishment of the BRICS Development Bank, and create mechanisms to deal with volatility in global currency markets.

2. Reform of Institutions of Global Governance

Recognising the shared objective of progressive and democratic transformation of the institutions of global governance, BRICS should strive to enhance the voice and representation of emerging economies and developing countries in multilateral forums. BRICS should actively explore innovative and complementary partnerships for sustainable and equitable development. The delegations propose the creation of a BRICS parliamentary forum as a platform for intensifying political interaction.

BRICS should continue to collaborate to identify and utilise strategic opportunities to advance its objectives of reform of global multilateral institutions in order to make them more democratic, representative and accountable.

3. Cooperation on Africa

BRICS should recognise the diversity of values and experiences represented in the separate and intersecting histories of their own and African countries in the pursuit of mutually beneficial social and economic development on the African continent. This should include the pursuit of deeper cooperation with the African Union, taking into account Africa's priorities, especially integration.

4. Education, Research and Skills Development for Building Industrialising Economies

BRICS should intensify its support for collaboration amongst academics and scholars through a variety of institutions, networks and programmes that advances education, research and skills development. This includes valuing local languages and cultural practices and establishing the required support mechanisms to make this possible. BRICS should consider the establishment of an independent BRICS rating agency for educational institutions as well as a BRICS university. The Forum proposes the establishment of a data bank with primary data on the five countries, as well as a digital platform with detailed information on researchers and institutions dealing with BRICS issues. The delegations note Brazil's offer to host the digital platform and the data bank.

5. Peace and Security

BRICS should continue to promote the centrality of the United Nations (UN), based on the principles of equality, mutual trust, and cooperation. It should be more active in the peaceful resolution of conflict, dealing with issues of international terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and drug- and human trafficking. Mutual security concerns, such as water, food, environment, health, and disaster preparedness, should continue to be a

focus. BRICS should also promote the peaceful use of outer space. BRICS should utilize their relative strengths in post-conflict resolution and peace-making, peace building and peace keeping under the auspices of the UN.

The Forum specially thanks the South African organisers for their excellent arrangements and generous hospitality.