

PROFILE

ABOUT AUTHOR
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BRICS WBA



LEBOGANG ZULU

The South African BRICS Women's Business Alliance in 2023



Achievements over the past three years

In July 2020, the Russian BRICS Chairship launched the BRICS Women's Business Alliance (BRICS WBA). The main aim of this alliance is to empower women entrepreneurs across the BRICS nations by providing them with a platform to increase their economic participation and access business opportunities. The inaugural gathering of the Alliance, led by Chairperson Anna Nesterova on 20 July 2020, was held via videoconference. At this gathering the attendees explored ways to promote women's entrepreneurship, identified opportunities for future collaboration, and renewed their commitment to advancing joint initiatives in sectors such as digital development, tourism and healthcare.

On 7 March 2021, during India's Chairship, the BRICS WBA, led by Rotating Chairperson Sangita Reddy, organised a virtual exposition for women-led businesses to expand business



opportunities for women entrepreneurs from the BRICS nations. Additionally, the WBA released a compendium of *Positive Stories* and published two knowledge papers, one on Inclusive Economy and the other on the proposed BRICS Centre for Arbitration and Dispute Resolution. The Alliance established the BRICS Joint Working Groups in sectors such as healthcare, food security and environmental safety, and tourism.

Under China's Presidency of the BRICS, the WBA, led by Rotating Chairperson Zhao Haiying, held a virtual meeting on 25 February 2022, to emphasise the importance of leveraging the collective strength of women in the BRICS nations. The WBA continued to prioritise key initiatives, including the BRICS Women Innovation Contest and the BRICS Women's Leadership Forum. The WBA's notable accomplishment was the publication of the BRICS Women's Development Report, which presented a comprehensive analysis of the current state and progress of women's development in the BRICS countries. The report extensively examined the status of women's health, education, economic opportunities and participation in decision-making and

management, highlighting noteworthy practices.

South Africa's BRICS Chairship and the WBA

During South Africa's BRICS presidency, Rotating Chairperson Lebogang Zulu led the alliance in convening a virtual handover meeting on 6 February 2023. At this meeting, a new export-oriented economic growth strategy was adopted for the BRICS and Africa, with a focus on women entrepreneurs and micro small medium manufacturing enterprises (MSMEs). The 2023 BRICS WBA trade and investment journey consists of export-oriented and investment-led scoping missions from March to April 2023, involving face-to-face engagements with major business associations, chambers of commerce and regulatory authorities in each of the BRICS member states to identify and frame capacity-building, trade and investment projects.

The next phase from May to July 2023 involves business-to-business (B2B) and association-to-association (A2A) match-making activities that virtually link the BRICS and African women entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises