



8th BRICS Academic Forum

Recommendations to the 8th BRICS Leaders Summit

September 23, 2016, New Delhi: The 8th BRICS Academic Forum comprising of experts and scholars from various research and academic institutions in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, met on September 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd, 2016, in Goa. The Forum expressed appreciation for the academic activities under the Russian presidency and were encouraged that the BRICS Leaders had taken note of the work and the recommendations proposed by this group.

Since the formal establishment of the BRICS grouping, the member nations as a collective unit have covered significant ground on a range of issues – from global governance reform, tackling new security challenges, managing global commons, to implementing new development paradigms, taking forward South-South cooperation, and expanding the potential of intra-BRICS trade.

The 8th Forum proposes the following recommendations to the BRICS leaders for their consideration:

Global Governance and BRICS Institutions

- 1) The extant global governance order does not adequately reflect the geopolitical and geoeconomic realities of the 21st century. The BRICS countries should unite to ensure that institutions such as the United Nations Security Council, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are reformed and transformed for fair representation. This will restore legitimacy and credibility of the international system.
- 2) The future of BRICS will be predicated on its ability to establish credible institutions; both formal and informal. The momentum gained since the establishment of the New Development Bank should be taken forward through the creation of a knowledge hub in the form of an analytical arm of the New Development Bank.
- 3) The mandate of this analytical arm of the NDB should be four-fold: (i) to provide research support for meeting the objectives of the NDB, specifically related to development finance, raising capital, procurement policies, implementation of best practices, capacity building, etc.; (ii) Provide intellectual leadership to the BRICS forum on international business, finance, trade and



economics, especially on emerging global issues such as climate change, digital infrastructure, movement of natural persons, and sustainable development; (iii) Provide research base for the emerging markets and developing economies with data, policy evaluations, policy suggestions and promoting south-south cooperation; and (iv) Provide the emerging markets perspective in global forums.

4) The research agenda should also be complemented with the creation of a BRICS research institution, that is able to source and collate ideas and research studies on wide ranging issues implicating economics, social and environmental studies, politics, internet governance, and security studies, from a pool of institutions within and outside BRICS. This think tank should be tasked to propose and promote alternative narratives and contextual solutions to the challenges of today. BRICS as a collective should shift from norm followers to norm makers.

5) With BRICS members increasingly looking to finance development projects outside their countries, a Development and Economic Partnership forum should be established. The objective of this forum should be to coordinate and streamline BRICS development partnerships and economic diplomacy.

New Spaces: Outer space, Internet and Ocean

6) Old norms, rules, and institutions are inadequate for the governance of new spaces and commons such as outer space, deep oceans and the internet. BRICS countries, with their financial and technological capabilities, have the foundation to become major actors in shaping the debates and gradually shaping the evolving rules and regulations in the area of these new commons. BRICS should work towards common standards and approaches in these new spaces.

7) Harmonisation of internet governance frameworks may foster innovation and significantly enhance international trade and e-commerce among BRICS and with others. Industry and banks in BRICS countries should collaborate to create common payment gateways. Governments should enable settlement in local currency for promoting BRICS-wide e-commerce.

8) A unified BRICS position on matters of internet governance, e-commerce, cyber security and online privacy will significantly contribute to the development of global cyber norms. BRICS should coordinate positions at the UN Governmental Group of Experts and other global forums.

9) BRICS should consider confidence building measures and normative agreements on digital economy and protecting digital spaces.



10) BRICS nations should have a common stand on non-weaponisation of outer-space and should commit to the peaceful exploration of outer-space through joint initiatives.

11) BRICS nations should have a coordination mechanism to ensure safety on the oceans, gainful development of the Blue Economy, safeguarding marine environments, promoting maritime trade, and sustainable use of ocean bed resources. BRICS could come up with suggestions to jointly address, amongst others, challenges such as maritime terrorism, narcotics trade, piracy, illegal trade and smuggling, over-exploitation of ocean resources, and human trafficking.

Trade and Innovation

12) Intra-BRICS trade in Global Value Chain (GVC) sector should be promoted as it has high potential to catalyse economic growth, enhance productivity, and generate employment.

13) A concerted BRICS effort is needed to restore the WTO authority as a multilateral body responsible for managing movement of goods and services. A BRICS task force should be instituted to discover common BRICS standards and benchmarks, and to work on other tariff and non-tariff issues.

14) BRICS should develop a road map to implement a long-standing idea for promoting currency swaps, settlement in local currencies and other instruments across BRICS.

15) Recognising the critical role of investment as an engine of economic development, the BRICS should promote and catalyse mutual investment, based on the principles of open, non-discriminatory, transparent, and predictable regulatory regimes.

Development Financing

16) The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development needs to be taken forward and implemented. To be able to meet the goals of financing development, more ambition and resolve is needed by the developed world and the international community. BRICS countries should stress the importance of bringing the international tax reform under the ambit of the UN, and must work towards this. Towards this urgent attention is needed on encouraging taxation at point of production rather than in the home country. The financial architecture should be tweaked to ensure that the flow of funds and remittances is made easier between our countries to reduce costs of payment systems. Illicit financial flows should be tackled comprehensively.



17) The Forum recognised the need for looking at the dynamics of the credit rating and credit worthiness framework currently operated by developed world agencies. BRICS should develop a BRICS credit rating mechanism that is not dependent on biased assessment of sovereign, political, or regulatory risks.

18) BRICS should work with the global banking systems and long term capital sources to promote access to finance, development and infrastructure projects.

19) Funding for urban development and urbanization is essential as this is where major growth is expected. The BRICS countries should pool solutions and experiences to fund and develop projects related to drinking water provision, sewage treatment, social infrastructure development, affordable housing, digital infrastructure, and support ambitions of developing 'smart-cities', expressed by some member states.

20) BRICS should ensure that the NDB and other BRICS initiatives support projects that enhance women's access to economic, political and social spaces. These BRICS institutions and platforms should also support women entrepreneurs and women led enterprises within and outside BRICS.

21) BRICS should encourage creation of a BRICS innovation fund that supports innovators and start-ups.

Climate Change and Energy

22) BRICS nations should continue to stress the importance of technological and financial flows from advanced economies to BRICS and other emerging and developing economies, in combating climate change. Technology transfers, technology facilitation mechanisms, and global technology regimes should be strengthened for this purpose.

23) BRICS should work towards encouraging pension funds and sovereign debt funds to consider enhancing financial flows to developing and emerging economies. These sources of long-term institutional finance are essential for responding to climate change. BRICS members should also strive towards recalibration of Basel Banking norms to ensure access to commercial capital needed for clean energy and infrastructure projects.

24) BRICS countries should actively support renewable energy initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance which focuses on solar power utilization and will have significant impact in the common effort to respond to climate change.



25) BRICS should explore various renewable energy options, such as ethanol, bio-fuels, solar, wind and hydropower, as may be appropriate to varied national contexts.

26) Conventional energy sources such as coal, oil, gas and nuclear will continue to provide base load generation and BRICS should invest in making such technologies more efficient and cleaner.

27) BRICS should seek to establish a BRICS Energy Agency to monitor and study issues of energy access, energy security and stability of energy systems within BRICS.

Agenda 2030: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

28) The success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) will – in a large part – be implicated by success of BRICS in achieving them as a sizeable number are living below the poverty line in BRICS countries. A coordinated strategy among the five nations across goals would help. The BRICS may consider setting up of the BRICS Taskforce on SDGs that could at a later date be institutionalized as a BRICS Development Partnership.

29) In addition to aspiring to achieve all SDGs, BRICS should consider three specific areas for urgent attention: Access to Finance; Access to Technology; and Access to Capacity Building.

30) Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) proposed for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires evolution of strategies for its effectiveness.

31) In the realm of capacity building BRICS should focus on three areas: statistical and data related capabilities; nature of reporting at sub-national, national and global fora; and supporting other developing economies in their efforts to meet the SDG agenda.

32) Finance for SMEs and sustainable businesses is essential for employment generation, removing inequality and preserving the environment. BRICS should co-ordinate national and international approaches, within and outside BRICS to facilitate such support.

33) There is an opportunity for increased cooperation among BRICS nations to leverage ICTs for financial inclusion and advance the economic capabilities of marginalized communities. Ambit of e-governance services should be widened by the use of non-Roman scripts. Efforts should be made to ensure that greater online content is produced from within the BRICS.



34) A BRICS led effort is required to tackle neglected diseases endemic in the developing world by developing affordable medicines. BRICS should collaborate to meet the ideals of 'medicine for all' for whoever needs it. Flexible IPR regimes are needed for ensuring access to essential medicines in BRICS and developing countries.

35) Efficient public healthcare systems should be a priority for BRICS and a High Level Experts Committee on health should be instituted to support the BRICS Health Ministers.

36) Upholding the human right of access to health, BRICS should intensify collaboration on trade of generic essential medicines, and should adapt their regulatory regimes for that purpose.

37) A BRICS Wellness Index, that assess individual well-being on parameters contextual to developing countries, could be an innovative BRICS proposition for measuring well-being, progress, and sustainability. Such an index should be developed and implemented through a collaborative BRICS effort.

38) BRICS should deepen collaboration in academic research across disciplines by establishing a joint fund to support research, offer fellowships for visiting scholars, and establish student exchange programs.

Security Challenges

39) BRICS should create its own security agenda for the management of threats and challenges like terrorism, illegal narcotics, organized crime, piracy, misuse of ICTs causing loss of life and property, promotion of extremism, and weaponization of outer space, amongst others.

40) Terror related incidents are now a real threat to global security. BRICS should work towards a common understanding of terrorism.

41) BRICS should formulate a global set of principles that regulate e-surveillance programs, catalyze globalisation of internet governance, and promote the right to access an open and safe internet.

42) Cyber security is an issue of current significance, where the BRICS can suggest new solutions to break the threat cycle, mitigate vulnerabilities and help avoid the cyber weapon race.

The Way Forward

43) The BRICS nations should set themselves bold goals to guide their collective journey and shape associational dynamics and practices. A 'polestar' initiative like a BRICS Space Station could set the benchmark for this ambition.



BRICS should go 'digital' in every sphere to promote collaboration, catalyze e-commerce, cement community affinities and shrink geographical distances.

44) Throughout the implementation of its programmatic ideals, BRICS should give emphasis to the promotion of gender-based rights. Women's agency in all development processes should be recognized and supported.

45) The BRICS academics and scholars were consistent in seeking democratisation of international institutions, inclusive and sustainable development, empowerment of excluded communities, and a gender sensitive global political and economic architecture. This BRICS Consensus should inform our development and growth agendas.

46) To take forward the recommendations of the Academic Forum, the Observer Research Foundation will setup the following three working groups during and beyond the Indian Presidency of the BRICS: (i) a Health Forum of experts; (ii) a Digital BRICS Forum; (iii) an academic task force for exploring long-term finance for renewable energy; and (iv) an Academic Chair dedicated to BRICS studies at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. The BRICS Think Tanks Council will be invited to India in January 2017 to review progress of the academic activities at the end of the Indian presidency.

47) The BRICS Academic Forum appreciates the efforts of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), for hosting the 8th BRICS Academic Forum in the beautiful state of Goa.

48) The BRICS academics and scholars look forward to participating at the next academic forum to be hosted in China, in 2017, by the China Center for Contemporary World Studies and assure them all support in the common endeavour to promote research, academic cooperation and people to people exchange.