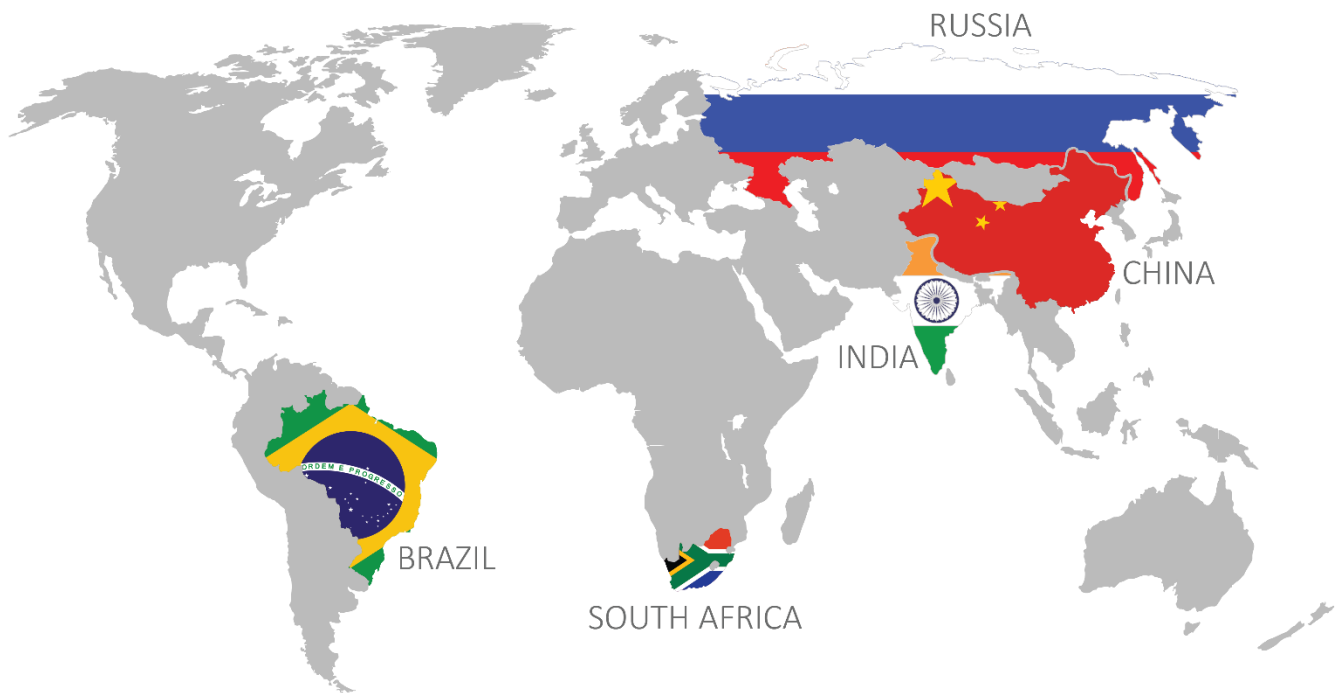




South African
BRICS Think Tank

Reviewing South Africa's 2018 BRICS Presidency: Taking lessons forward



BRAZIL



RUSSIA



INDIA



CHINA



SOUTH AFRICA

Proceedings report of a symposium hosted by the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)
associated with UNISA, and South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT)

20 February 2019

Rapporteurs:

Remofiloe Lobakeng, Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA

Simphiwe Mongwe, Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA

Jesuloba Ilesanmi, Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA

Chisola Chembe, Visiting Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA

Edited by: *Arina Muresan, Researcher at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA and Philani Mthembu, Executive Director at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA*

Designed by: *Makhethhe Makamase, Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA and Kenny Dlamini, Research Officer at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA*

Cover image: <http://sabtt.org.za/>

Published in April 2019 by the Institute for Global Dialogue
Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA

3rd Floor Robert Sobukwe Building

263 Nana Sita Street

Pretoria

Tel: +27 12 3376082

Fax: +27 86 212 9442

info@igd.org.za

www.igd.org.za

All rights reserved. The material in this publication may not be reproduced, stored or transmitted without the prior permission of the publisher. Short extracts may be quoted, provided the source is fully acknowledged.

Table of Contents

Abbreviation and Acronyms	4
Introduction	5
Mr. Dave Malcomson, Chief Director: Regional Organisations, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)	6
Ms. Vivian Ramathuba, Senior Professional, BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) Africa Regional Centre (ARC)	7
Ambassador Professor Iqbal Jhazbhay, Member, African National Congress (ANC) International Relations N.E.C Sub-committee	8
Professor Siphamandla Zondi, Head of the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria	10
Ms. Marianne Buenaventura Goldman, BRICSSAMIT Strategy Manger, Oxfam	12
Question and answer session	13
Conclusions and way forward.....	16
Appendices: Programme	18
About the Institute for Global Dialogue, associated with UNISA	19

Abbreviation and Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ARC	African Regional Centre
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BAPA +40	United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation
BBC	BRICS Business Council
BJ	Bharatiya Janata
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
EJN	Economic Justice Network
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
G7	Group of 7
G20	Group of 20
G77	Group of 77
IDCPC	International Department of the Communist Party of China
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NDB	New Development Bank
NDP	New Development Plan
NiHSS	National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
SABTT	South African BRICS Think Tanks
SADC	Southern African Development Communities
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
IPEA	Institute for Applied Economic Research
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Introduction

Dr Philani Mthembu (Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and Dr Ndivhuwo Luruli, Director, South Africa BRICS Think Tank (SABTT)

In 2018, South Africa hosted the BRICS chairship and 10th summit under the theme of “BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution”. A number of actors continue to be proactive in the BRICS fora and thus engage through the following tracks of diplomacy: Track I engages formal diplomatic role players at national governmental level; Track II engagement is facilitated through government and non-government affiliated institutions, business councils and academic forums; and Track III engages civil society and the “people-to-people” dimension of BRICS. This dialogue is an opportunity to launch this year’s discussions by taking stock of South Africa’s presidency in 2018 and receiving feedback from various work streams and diplomatic tracks where South African delegations had participated. Furthermore, it is important to deliberate on South Africa’s role in the upcoming 11th Summit, hosted by Brazil, and work towards maximizing Team South Africa’s contribution to the BRICS partnership. The involvement of the various diplomatic tracks in this public dialogue is thus a deliberate effort to ensure that over time the idea of a Team South Africa crystallises in the country’s various global engagements. While the various actors involved in BRICS initiatives may not always see eye to eye and often use different lenses to interpret global events, it is important to enable spaces where all the various actors within and outside of the state can interact and share their experiences in order to deepen the various forms of cooperation with BRICS counterparts. It is this process that the Institute for Global Dialogue and the South African BRICS Think Tank are interested in facilitating through these BRICS Dialogues.



The dialogue was co-hosted with the South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT) as part of a dialogue series that tracks developments in BRICS. Housed within the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the SABTT endeavours to provide a platform for researchers and academics to enquire into BRICS related research from South African, African and intra BRICS perspectives, while providing technical and financial support and overseeing research outputs that contribute to practical policy inputs. The Academic Forum was held from 28 – 31 May 2018, in Johannesburg, and reflected on the main theme of the South African BRICS presidency through the sub-theme of “Envisioning Inclusive Economic Development through a Socially Responsive Economy”. The Academic Forum engaged on the following topics and themes: gender and inequality; economic prosperity in the context of manufacturing and financial initiatives for sustainable development; universal health coverage; social protection, agriculture and food security; governance, peace and stability; leveraging educational, scientific and productive collective strengths; advancing creative powers for education exchange; creating an accessible, forward-looking and impactful research commons for the global South; and energy research. The SABTT looks forward to Brazil’s chairship, which will be held in November 2019 and further encourages the spirit of collaboration and cooperation through the joint research projects undertaken by academics and researchers.

Mr. Dave Malcomson, Chief Director: Regional Organisations, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)

Mr. Malcomson began the discussion by providing an overview of the BRICS. South Africa gained membership to BRICS in 2010. This membership is based on South Africa's national objectives, through the New Development Plan (NDP), its African agenda and achieving Agenda 2063, and interacting meaningfully in partnerships that encourage the voice of the global South and emerging markets. The grouping is based on shared values that aim to restructure the global political, economic and financial architecture to be more equitable, balanced and resting on the important pillars of multilateralism and international law. The 4th Industrial Revolution is of immense importance; as much as it provides opportunities, it also provides challenges in the field of the future of work and the potential for huge job losses especially in Africa. With regard to the activities built around the South African chairship, there was a special retreat to discuss what worked and what did not and what work to look forward to. Prior to the summit there had been various lead-up meetings. This helped build up the kind of narrative we wanted to see during the South African chairship. An initiative that South Africa wanted to pass through when it first chaired in 2013, invited the heads of state that are members of the African Union (AU), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and various leaders of the South African Development Community (SADC). While this focus remained regional, it still represents leadership from the global South, which brings about very useful dialogues and has been continued throughout the BRICS chairships.



South Africa assumed the BRICS chairship on 1 January until 31 December 2018. South Africa's 2018 BRICS Action Plan aimed to host approximately 100 meetings and activities related to the various Sectoral Ministerial and Working Group tracks including the 10th BRICS Summit, on 25-27 July 2018. In addition to exclusive Track I meetings, South Africa provided the following opportunities for BRICS leaders to meet, discuss and contribute to the BRICS work with: the BRICS Business Council (BBC); the New Development Bank (NDB); and the National Security Advisors; Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations, who met in June to discuss matters of global significance to solidify the agenda that had been set for the 10th BRICS Summit; Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); a further 12 BRICS Ministerial-level meetings were conducted on areas of trade, education, industry, finance, science and technology, culture, energy, agriculture, youth, communication, and labour; lastly, during the Summit, South Africa hosted a BRICS Outreach Dialogue, combining the initially planned BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Initiative. While BRICS activities are specifically scheduled, the members also meet on the side lines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and Group of 20 (G20) meetings.

South Africa's chairmanship was very significant last year because it was the end of a decade, it enabled the team to have a period of reflection on what had worked in the first 10 years and what to look forward to in the next 20 years. South Africa does not want the BRICS to become like every other multilateral institution where at the end of the year many decisions need to be taken and new initiatives are tabled, which then become impossible to maintain. Thus, much emphasis is placed on continuity and tactical outcomes. Therefore, working closely with China, from 2017, and ahead to Brazil, for 2019, has been operational in South Africa's chairship in 2018. The BRICS resolved that they could maintain the following initiatives that have been tabled during the 10th BRICS summit: BRICS Working Group on the 4th Industrial Revolution through the PartNIR Task Team; the establishment of a BRICS Network of Science Parks, Technology Business Incubators and Small and Medium Enterprises; the establishment of a Vaccine Research Centre, to be hosted in South Africa; the establishment of a Working Group on Tourism; the establishment of a Women's Forum and Women's Business Alliance; the agreement to explore the establishment of a Working Group on Peacekeeping; and the establishment of a Foreign Spokespersons Platform.

In terms of the Brazilian BRICS chairship, South Africa hosted the final BRICS Sherpa meeting in Durban on 4 December 2018 and officially handed over the chairship on 1 January 2019. There is a common message resounding in Brazil's meetings this year, and that is with a large economic and innovation focus. The 11th BRICS Summit will be held in Brasilia on 13-14 November 2019, to coincide with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Chile. The first Sherpa meeting will be held on 14-16 March 2019 and the Foreign Ministers will meet on 26 July in Rio, where after the comprehensive BRICS programme will be followed. Thus far, Brazil has announced that it will focus its chairship on: Innovation, including Industry 4.0 and the future of work; health, including the vaccine research centre in South Africa; fighting transnational crime, specifically through money laundering, drug trafficking, organized and urban crime; and the promotion of trade and industry, including infrastructure development and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). As BRICS embarks into a new decade under Brazil's leadership, BRICS will see another step forward in consolidating the work and ensuring that it will achieve the objectives and initiatives set in the global South and internationally. As always, the partnership will be undertaken with goodwill and practical approaches to resolving internal differences between member states and concentrate common positions that strengthen the BRICS.

Ms. Vivian Ramathuba, Senior Professional, BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) Africa Regional Centre (ARC)

Ms. Ramathuba considered the work of the African Regional Centre (ARC) in its first year in South Africa. The job of the centre is to identify projects and to form partnerships with other organizations that have an understanding of the local environment.

Currently, the centre is still in the process of recruiting personnel and identifying projects. The execution of the stages of a project cycle include, but are not limited to the following: project identification and conceptual study; pre-feasibility study and project evaluation; project definition and comprehensive feasibility study; project execution; approval and monitoring and evaluation. The bank also plans to cooperate further with international financial institutions, including the African Development Bank (AfDB), regional offices of other multilateral development banks and national development banks. In order to contribute to holistic infrastructure development, the bank carries the



following functions; firstly, country programming to develop or contribute to a country's development strategy and develop effective regional planning. Secondly, portfolio management and project administration. Thirdly, the bank serves as an operational interface between the Bank, South Africa and the Region, including the issue of enlarging the membership of the Bank. Through such engagement, the ARC could optimise efficiency and contribute to the alignment of the Bank's priorities and Bank Strategy with that of the Region. Fourthly, the provision of technical assistance for preparation and implementation of infrastructure and sustainable projects, including industrial projects. Fifthly, the provision of knowledge management, analysis and support, including tapping into relevant knowledge, experiences and lessons from the region. Sixthly, the development of appropriate financing and funding project models. And lastly, to conduct capacity building for African public sector officials, agencies and local partners in project preparation and management; which includes the implementation, monitoring and evaluation skills to ensure control of quality of infrastructure projects. Going forward, the bank aims to improve infrastructure holistically by focusing on the following types of infrastructure projects: clean energy through wind, solar, hydro power; transport through road, rail, air and sea ports; irrigation and water resource management; as well as sustainable urban development through water and electricity supply, solid waste management and social infrastructure.

Ambassador Professor Iqbal Jhazbhay, Member, African National Congress (ANC) International Relations N.E.C Sub-committee

The discussion covered three key areas; the concept note, the programme of the BRICS Political Parties Plus conference, and some detail into the communique. The first BRICS political parties conference was held in China, Beijing in 2017, and that



led to a suggestion that the conference be held more regularly, depending on the particular chair. In 2018, in consultation with the BRICS partners, South Africa, more particularly the ANC decided to convene the BRICS political parties plus dialogue. In that regard, a concept note was developed and sent to all the BRICS political parties, including partners and friends who were invited. Some of those attending this event included the likes of Venezuela, Botswana, Lesotho and Kenya. The concept note emphasised inclusive economic development, multilateralism, and an element of peace and stability. These elements are evident in the programme that openly covers these discussions on inclusive development, multilateralism and it also covers the

dimension of the 4th Industrial Revolution. The feeling of the ANC committee was that the element of peace and stability needs to be given particular focus. Two countries outside BRICS, Ethiopia and Eritrea, were asked to speak about that theme. It was a discussion that delivered good news on peace and stability; as well as the peace declaration between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The concept note also draws on what President Ramaphosa mentioned, we are living in an age where extreme forms of nationalism have appeared. An isolationist trend is emerging, and that this conference should not overlook those challenges. South Africa is emerging from a period of difficulty, in addition, global trends are also increasingly difficult to navigate. The BRICS partnership should try to challenge and engage those trends in order to come up with a common agenda. The broad perspective of the concept note was adopted and became the official document of the BRICS Political Parties Plus dialogue held in Pretoria.

At the dialogue, South Africa covered inclusive development, China covered multilateralism, the 4th Industrial Revolution was given to India to discuss, and peace and stability was given to Ethiopia and Eritrea to discuss. The programme was designed

in such a way that they broke up into different commissions on those particular themes, and came back to the conference to report, debate and discuss what should or not be included in the coming dialogue. What was particularly unique about the second BRICS political parties plus dialogue is that South Africa and the ANC particularly decided to invite: the Chinese Communist Party; India's Indian Congress Party and the ruling Bharatiya Janata (BJ) Party; Russia's Communist Party and Putin's United Party, which could not attend because of a clash with their congress meeting. When engaging with Brazil, the Workers Party attended and the incumbent ruling party of Brazil did not attend the conference.

The distinctive part about the Political Parties Plus dialogue is that the ANC decided to formulate the programme in a way that advanced many of the resolutions which were taken in the ANC national conference in Nasrec, particularly issues of financing, inclusive development, multilateralism, and ultra-nationalism. When the communique had to be discussed and debated there was contention on some issues, and South Africa had to play that bridge building role on some of those difficult issues. South Africa will be hosting the SADC Western Sahara Solidarity Conference. This is a very contentious issue among the BRICS countries, but when the discussion came up at the level of communique into agreeing that issue was included as part of the discussion and is awaiting advancement and implementation. The programme attempted to reflect many of the priorities that were developed in the concept note, and finally the communique also tried to reflect that and took into account the level of debate and discussions which came from the different commissions and different perspectives that came out at plenary. The ANC believes that the Political Parties Plus conference should continue in future to explore and engage on how they would want to share the next agenda of the BRICS Political Parties Plus dialogue.





Prof Zondi discussed the BRICS Think Tanks and Academic fora and their engagements in BRICS related affairs, and made remarks based on academic observations. The interactions on the academic fora are as old as BRICS, and during the second year of the BRICS summit academia made a contribution and moved to establish their own academic forum and a think tank space took place after that. From 28 – 31 May 2018, the academic forum and the BRICS think tank council met to prepare for the BRICS summit. The two groupings came together to present ongoing research and recommendations in establishing policies under the theme "Envisioning inclusive development through a socially responsive economy". The SABTT is a specially established forum, and housed within the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NiHSS), to service BRICS, there are two other countries that have the same set up; the Russians established what is called a National Committee for BRICS Research, and the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) also established a special vehicle to facilitate a think tank and academic forum called China Centre for Contemporary World Studies. The Brazilians use an existing institution as an interface for foreign policy, civil society and the rest of society called the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), and the Indians gave a task to a specific existing think tank, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the mandate to convene others.

The BRICS bring a variety of approaches in each area that each relate to a national context and are able to work together to take the group forward. This includes the discussion on gender and inequality and thinking about inclusive growth. There were a number of breakaways from the discussions at the academic forum in 2018; economic prosperity, universal health, health coverage, social protection, government peace and security, connective strands, areas of education and science, production sectors, BRICS creative power, a global South knowledge commons, and energy research. Approximately ten representatives from each country from different sectors contributed to these discussions with diversity coming from different angles of thinking from each working group.

The BRICS meeting represented a variety of thinking, in almost all of the cases national dialogue played a major role in discussing further BRICS creative powers and social protection. South Africa's hosting of the academic forum in 2018 focused on the following themes; gender and inequality; economic prosperity in the context of manufacturing and financial initiatives for sustainable development; universal health coverage; social protection, agriculture and food security; governance, peace and stability; leveraging educational, scientific and productive collective strengths; advancing creative powers for education exchange; creating an accessible, forward-looking and impactful research commons for the global South; and energy research. Researchers put together their research activities, had discussions and tabled those discussions in the form of papers at the summit. The papers are used to further conversations in the BRICS meetings and provide policy inputs at Track I level. It is very important to note that it was decided in 2012 by academics and thinkers to create a BRICS platform for

discussion, research and to further information sharing on BRICS. This was decided at the time when academics and thinkers produced a large document on BRICS called the "The long-term vision of BRICS" which looked at BRICS longevity and delivery in the coming years. The BRICS document produced in 2012 drives the BRICS countries vision for the future. This is seen through the possible establishment of BRICS Plus that was already thought through in the 2012 document, which is in the pursuit of that vision that still drives the process.

Lastly, the question on how effective South Africa was in chairing the BRICS in 2018, relates to how effective China, Russia, India and Brazil were before that. The track record of South Africa's chairship follows the track record of the preceding chairs because the working groups build on the work of the previous chairs. Therefore, the biggest challenge that South Africa faces is how to harness that handover process. No one owns any particular agenda for a particular year but they simply carry on the agenda of the previous year and prepare the agenda for the next chair, therefore the whole of BRICS owns the agenda. The BRICS does not have institutions or a secretariat. However, it has been further discussed that BRICS should have its own secretariat, and this has also been said about the G20, G7 and all the other mini-lateral partnerships. In order for BRICS to achieve effectiveness without a secretariat they must be very skilled in institutionalizing the agenda though they haven't institutionalized the structures. Therefore, it is in that particular point where participating and supporting institutions need to be clear on agenda points and maintain steady involvement. Next, the agreed upon activities are upheld through the need to keep the dialogue internally alive. If dialogue structures fail, they need to be re-establishing consensus continuously when country governance, civil society leaders and academics change.

Therefore, continuous dialogue, although it may seem repetitive - is critical. In this particular institution, more dialogues and discussions are needed because it provides researchers and academics the platform for ideas that need to be implemented and enter the policy space. The platform allows administrators of the think tank systems to sharpen and strengthen its convening abilities. The academic forum has the ability to bring certain actors together and make sure that in each one of the BRICS summits the whole set of actors are in place. The Chinese showed us how it could bring many more different countries represented in the BRICS Outreach programme. South Africa was hard pressed to make sure they maintain that; it was unable to replicate the Chinese but maintained the Outreach programme. The ability to find convergence of interest among all the parties and constantly establishing common points allow for the BRICS actors to manage divergence more effectively. The convening of other countries beyond BRICS, which was first established in KwaZulu-Natal, eThekweni, and had developed into what is called BRICS Plus; and the ability to keep that going is a mark of success. Lastly, the ability to champion and leverage the agenda of the BRICS and taking the agenda to the margins of other platforms in the global South, like the Group of 77 + China (G77 + China); and global North, like the G20, the World Bank and others also shows the added value of the BRICS. This is a positive signal that the BRICS partnership is valuable and should be continuously strengthened because there is no institutionalised structure or physical secretariat.

In conclusion, there are a number of challenges facing the future of BRICS. Firstly, a challenge for BRICS is to align the partnership to national interests. The BRICS countries need to bring BRICS closer to the people, because popular support of BRICS will assist BRICS governments in the longevity of the partnership. Secondly, the BRICS partners are constantly discussing the issue of consolidation. This issue needs to be debated in terms of what it would mean for the BRICS to: consolidate the agenda rather than just passing the agenda and adding to the list of activities; and ensure that the agenda does not become displaceable should there be sudden change of governance. It is important to anticipate how each country interprets domestic change internally and what kind of discourse may appear as anti-BRICS. Next, it is important to start moving towards institutionalising the BRICS agenda so that it is not subject drastic changes whenever political leaders change. Next, Prof. Zondi explained that it is important to create linkages between BRICS, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Agenda 2063, the G77 and other existing structures and adapt it properly for those that are already institutionalized and exist on the ground. Lastly, the inter-BRICS functional cooperation needs to be maintained and strengthened; the extent to which South Africa and India, India and China, and China and Brazil have strong bilateral trade investment, economic, political cultural cooperation among them enables further continuation to the global BRICS. This is linked to an important question about how BRICS thinks about its internal strategic cohesion. For example, its ability to continually appear as a single body even if it's on specific issues, rather than a gathering of countries, will challenge BRICS should they all end up being a permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or other international structures where national interests are highly contested.



Ms. Buenaventura Goldman began her presentation by introducing the BRICS civil society engagement and activity, its history, its aims and objectives in order to raise awareness about Civil BRICS and its participants. The added value of civil BRICS under the South African chairship in 2019 is a positive example of people-to-people engagements, the inclusion of grassroots communities, as well as of being able to see how we can link local perspectives to national and international engagements, such as BRICS. The Civil BRICS were first formalised and recognised at the BRICS leaders' communique under South Africa's presidency in 2019, this was not something that happened over the last two years but rather happened over a period of time. In 2013, civil society first began to engage

without a formalized space but with intent through the proposed concept note for BRICS. In addition, Civil BRICS attempted to convene on the side-lines of important international dialogues, which drew together a number of key issue areas on South African cooperation. It was also at this time that Civil BRICS began to organise as civil society and developed what the group desired to see in terms of engaging in BRICS. In 2014, the BRICS Sherpa in Brazil convened the first civil society meeting on the side-lines of the Fortaleza summit, in Brazil. South African civil society was able to share the concept of Civil BRICS with Brazil. Following the Fortaleza summit, the first civil BRICS summit was in Ufa, Russia, in 2015 and then followed by Delhi, India, in 2016. However, the civil society initiative originated with South Africa during the Durban Summit in 2013, where a concept note on Civil BRICS or Track III diplomacy was submitted to DIRCO. Therefore, the process has evolved over the last five years, and the aim for Civil BRICS is to have an autonomous self-determining platform for civil society to organise itself not only in terms of its processes but also in terms of its agenda, thematic priorities and regular opportunities for participants. Moving forward, the South African Civil BRICS hopes that South Africa can continue to show leadership in terms of civil society in the BRICS space.

Civil BRICS South Africa places immense importance on the links between grassroots communities and Civil BRICS processes. Four provincial meetings in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga as well as Gauteng have been convened to share BRICS related information at grassroots levels, and other provinces were brought into these meetings. This was an initial step in developing policy recommendations that would be grounded in local realities. During the pre-civil BRICS meeting in 2018, civil society and organisations from other BRICS countries were gathered to deliberate and discuss key priority areas that include: inclusive economic development, land, agriculture, peace and security issues, gender equality, mining, climate change, the NDB, and what civil society's participation and impact should be. Civil BRICS has been able to establish a formal dialogue with BRICS decision makers, which enables Civil BRICS to make substantive contributions to BRICS formulation, based on civil society recommendations especially from a people-to-people perspective while also contributing to South-South cooperation.

It is possible for most people to get involved in Civil BRICS. Civil BRICS is large and diverse, it ranges from Community Based Organisations to national to social movements. To those who are particularly interested in engaging in the Civil BRICS process whether it is through the South African structure, or other BRICS countries, it is possible to engage the Economic Justice Network (EJN) as an official focal point and take the lead in South Africa's Civil BRICS secretariat. In terms of lessons learned, it has not been easy but for those that have participated, there are about eleven steering community members representing

all the nine provinces with a strong community base and network. Tracks that focus on the technical areas, in particular the academic forum, are vital to the success of BRICS, but civil society adds a unique contribution in this configuration of BRICS through the people-to-people engagements, building solidarity and bringing in the people equation.

Civil BRICS is predominantly challenged by access to funding and various dialogues and outreach has been convened on a shoestring budget. Ms. Buenaventura Goldman further explained that Civil BRICS has not had too much support or contributions from the government. Therefore, the Civil BRICS movement is dependent on donor funding. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) South Africa and other donors have been generous in their contributions. Advanced planning is also key especially when the goal is to have meaningful process and be inclusive. The logistics go beyond the funding, the structure and general organisation need to be informed by South Africa's participation on global platforms and events. Therefore, it is important for Civil BRICS to have a wider understanding and subsequently link through the various processes like the BAPA + 40 conference in March 2019 in Buenos Aires dealing with South-South cooperation issues and linking to the G20. The issues are very similar in terms of policy recommendations as well as in terms of ensuring that there is a strong civil society engagement.

It was through the South African leadership that human rights were introduced in any BRICS declaration report. DIRCO has also supported civil society in terms of the civil society trajectory and participation in international affairs. Civil BRICS have that acknowledgement and going forward we hope that the South African government will continue with the same momentum. Civil BRICS is still in the infant stages and it will take some time for the group to grow further and institutionalize. Much attention is aimed at the main summit and the meetings that happen before and after these summits, however it is supporting dialogues like these that enable discussions across the various tracks, and to reflect and build on what was said in the summit and meetings. In promoting synergy with the other tracks, it is important to sustaining civil society work beyond the actual summits and to see through engagements during the year. With Brazil's chairship commencing, there is still a lot of work to do in terms of unpacking all the policy recommendations from South Africa's 2018 chairship and creating a team on South Africa's position or seeing through these priorities. For example, Civil BRICS has had a number of meetings with the ARC to look at what is the NDB and its contribution to South Africa. These kinds of dialogues should be encouraged to continue. Another South African initiative that was started during South Africa's chairship in 2018 is the women's forum, which is still in its conceptual stages and something that Brazil may investigate further.

Civil society has been able to have more engagement in more of the government-to-government meetings. It is proving possible to engage formal structures in some of the thematic areas, for example when India was leading in the issues of tax and issues of infrastructure financing institutions in Africa. The various tracks and the various expertise of civil society adds immense value in terms of sharing and being able to take part in the meetings that take place along the year. Some information that was shared for the forthcoming 2019 BRICS summit included the importance of working on the outcomes from the 2018 summit with DIRCO and deepening civil society engagements and move forward in existing initiatives and any new ones. Leadership also needs to be looked at so that different partners can be synergised. In terms of leadership composition, it is important to interrogate their thematic priorities, challenges, and how these will be handled. This is a particular concern in terms of change of government as what we are currently seeing is more restrictions on civil society internationally. However, there seems to be a commitment to continue with the work that was started in 2018 and the South Africa civil BRICS group will remain optimistic in their contributions.

Question and answer session

An audience member expressed interest in the consideration for extending the BRICS chairship to two years because the current one-year term seems to end just as it begins and the extension of the duration will also allow for more continuity.

The panel responded by explaining that there has been no discussion regarding the extension of the BRICS presidency. South Africa's chairship was very much about continuity and consolidation, and the team managed to work very closely with Chinese colleagues in 2017, and now are working forward with Brazilian colleagues to ensure this element and Brazil will ensure this

continuity. South Africa provided continuity by furthering the work from the Chinese 2017 chairship. It is not about implementing in one year, but rather about implementation over a period of time. An example is the establishment of the NDB; talks into this began in Durban in 2013, while the bank was only established later. There is the agreement that chairs will take on each other's initiatives once there is an agreement as to what is the next important step for the partnership. Next, the option of a longer chairship presents a number of challenges, such as whether having more time will make one more effective as opposed to having a long-term agenda with different stewards. Another challenge is that having more time might mean more time to entrench the agenda along the host's national and international objectives as opposed to those of the BRICS.

Another Question focused on what the NDB is doing in order to bring development in terms of agriculture?

The panel expressed that the NDB recognizes agriculture as an important sector, although the NDB may not be directly involved in the primary level it does support the sector through infrastructure by offering important aspects such as irrigation and water. The NDB is also looking into a fresh produce market, which will assist in terms of bringing in farmers and buyers into the discussion of the bank and BRICS. Agriculture was discussed strongly and robustly at the BRICS political parties council and it was agreed that it must be given its central place within any policy development, be it either economic or political. South Africa is working with the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa to fund irrigation and infrastructure, which fund direct infrastructure projects leading to irrigation, as well as offer loan facilities that focus on agriculture.

The next question explored the long-anticipated opening of membership to the NDB. The BRICS bank is open to all members of the UN; however, this is a concern because BRICS was formed in order to offer a different view from the West yet it is being invited in. What is the way forward for BRICS in order to offer a different view from the Western financial institutions and how will the West be prevented from imposing its standards and policies on the NDB?

The panel explained that there is a provision in the constitution of the NDB that states that the bank is open to members of the UN. However, there are current discussions by the governors in this regard as well as the criteria of members of the bank. Moreover, a new prospective member needs to be invited by the bank. The NDB constitution also states that the bank cannot give away more than 50 percent of bank ownership, this is done to ensure that the BRICS Five never lose control of the bank. This clause also ensures that the bank is not subjected to external conditionalities in how it is run. The next NDB meeting will take place from 31 March – 2 April 2019 in Cape Town and involve the Board of Governors. In addition, it is important to pay attention to the discussions by the BRICS Business Forum that involves the business representatives from the BRICS countries, which include Government Level Business discussions through the BRICS ministers of trade and industry.

Another audience member focused on the importance of global South rating agencies and asked why the BRICS are still making use of Western rating agencies instead of creating BRICS rating agencies?

The panel explained that the ANC took a decision to support the setting up of a BRICS rating agency and it was part of discussions at the ANC elective conference, held in Nasrec, Johannesburg in 2017. BRICS is seized with the issue of the bias nature of Western ratings agencies. Since India's chairship in 2016, there has been discussion about setting up a BRICS rating agency. National rating agencies have been identified in order to see how they can get together to have a discussion on setting up a BRICS rating agency. The use of local currency was also mentioned. The president of the bank identified currency fluctuation as one of the biggest cost factors on loans on projects particular if it is US Dollar based loans. One of the key things the bank has done is to look at the five member states issuing bonds in local currency in order to reduce risks and the possibility of being vulnerable to dollar fluctuations.

The following question considered the status of human rights among the BRICS and asked if BRICS is another toothless organisation where members will not be held accountable over their human rights violations. South Africa is often used as an example of a human rights protector and promoter, so how will South Africa play this role in the BRICS?

The BRICS have accepted that they are about the convergence of interests. Which means they only meet in issues where they share interest. It is not a multilateral body in the true sense but rather an issue based mini-lateral body. Which is why they vote against each other in the UNSC. It is also important to note that human rights encompass not only individual rights, but also socio-economic and environmental rights.

The next theme considered the presence and importance of civil society in BRICS. The audience asked what makes civil BRICS different from other groupings and what can civil society do in order to give civil BRICS a voice and make it more impactful and not run the risk of becoming another grouping?

The panel responded by stating that Civil BRICS is a journey that started five years ago; the BRICS thinks tanks and academic forum is an initiative that was immediately supported by the government, while civil BRICS was not. Civil BRICS realises that the challenges and contexts of each of the BRICS countries are different, and each process has to be reached through consensus. In terms of the influence, the people-people track is now gaining momentum. This has also enabled civil society to learn more about BRICS and the NDB and what exactly they are doing for them.

The following question explored how will Brazil continue the gender agenda started by South Africa?

The panel explained that there is a concept note to this effect. The last meeting of the group that is setting up the gender working group was in December 2018. During the first meeting with the Sherpa, as part of the handing over report there was a chapter about the elements of South Africa's chairship that Brazil would take forward in 2019, the full establishment of the women's forum was part of that hand over report. In addition, from South African discussions with Brazilian colleagues, Brazil indicated that they will take on all elements of the report, the gender aspect included. A discussion was had as to which issues to focus on under the gender issues umbrella; whether a particular gender track be included or mainstream gender across all the tracks, for example, women in peace building, access to funding and resources for small-scale women farmers or access to funding for women in business to name a few. These are all areas to be considered. The one element that the Russian counterparts did bring was that of the Women's Business Alliance which looks at providing a platform for women in small business to meet with women running big corporations in order to share ideas and offer support.

Next, the 4th Industrial Revolution and peace keeping efforts were mentioned in the presentations, what are some of the developments that observers can look forward to in this regard?

The panel stated that these elements will continue under the Brazilian chairship, and South Africa will still have an inference in making sure that they do not disappear from the agenda. The fact that most of these UN peacekeeping operations are concerned with Africa, results in a feeling that South Africa needs to be cooperating particularly with the UN in how to make the UN more responsive to African conflict situations and that the resources and equipment needed can assist us with what we are trying to achieve with the full spectrum of ensuring peace in Africa. In addition, from the political parties point of view, the focus is to ensure that the 4th Industrial Revolution is a great avenue for job creation. The trade unions are very concerned about job losses making this a balancing act of creating jobs and technological advancement.

Another audience member asked about the purported idea that South Africa is a developmental state and its foreign policy being formed by this idea, but to what extent is South Africa able to firmly put that agenda in the BRICS?

Since the time of President Mbeki South Africa has put itself forward as a developmental state and we have pushed this in SADC, AU, African strategic partnerships and other institutions and what is needed to ensure the development of Africa and South Africa at large. What is meant when referring to South Africa as an enabling catalyst is that South Africa will bring issues of the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative, Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme, from the African agenda into the BRICS space This is inclusive of collective and individual assurance from BRICS members that they will be assisting Africa in the implementation of these programmes but also as equally when it comes to the G20 and UN.

Next, the session explored the theme of trade, and the prospect of a preferential trade agreement within the BRICS that would help implement a developmental policy on the BRICS agenda. In addition, what the future of the trade union forum will be as an initiative that was energized and organized by the Russians.

Thus far there has not been any talks of a free trade agreement between BRICS countries. In addition, it is fully expected that Brazil will continue with the initiative of trade unions. There will be a meeting with Brazil and other colleagues in the middle of March where we will be looking at Brazil's plan of action for their chairship. If this agenda item has fallen away then South Africa will engage with the Brazilians to include them in the agenda.

Lastly, the audience asked about the BRICS political parties forum inclusion of opposition parties and if there are discussions of what would happen in the event of a regime change?

The panel explained that one of the unique features of the BRICS political parties dialogue was to bring together all parties, opposition included. For instance, in Botswana, we have the Botswana Democratic Party and the Botswana National Party, in Lesotho, given it is a priority area for South Africa's foreign policy in advancing peace, included the Basotho National Party and the Basotho National Convention. This has created a certain tone and it will be interesting to see how this unfolds in Brazil.



Conclusions and way forward

The dialogue provided an overview of South Africa's involvement during its chairship in 2018 through the three diplomatic tracks. From the dialogue, there are a number of recurring themes; firstly, the 4th Industrial Revolution is a primary focus in reaching development goals and how the future of work will be interpreted. While it will be taken forward into the Brazilian presidency and various economic and science diplomacy partnerships have been struck up, it is becoming increasingly important to continue the lobby process among all tracks of diplomacy. Secondly, access to the BRICS tracks of diplomacy is gaining more prominence as BRICS is being popularised. More information and clarity is needed as there are more

developments and agenda items added to the BRICS discussions. As more people become involved there is endless curiosity about how the BRICS concerns them. Therefore, the larger task of bringing the BRICS and members, the NDB and ARC, the political parties and BRICS Plus and BRICS outreach partnership closer to the people is vital. Going forward it is important to keep track of the promises that have been tabled by the BRICS and drive an inclusive South African progress through BRICS as one of the strategic partnerships.

Appendices: Programme



South African BRICS Think Tank

**IGD and SABTT Symposium: South Africa's BRICS Engagement
Programme, 20 February 2019
Sheraton Hotel, Cnr Stanza Bopape & Wessels Street, Arcadia, Pretoria**

Reviewing South Africa's 2018 BRICS Presidency: Taking lessons forward

9:00 - 9:30	Arrival and registration
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome and opening remarks by Dr. Philani Mthembu, Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue, and Dr. Ndivhuwo Luruli, Director, South African BRICS Think Tank
9:45 – 11:30	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Dave Malcomson, Chief Director: Regional Organisations, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)• Ms. Vivian Ramathuba, Senior Professional, BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) Africa Regional Centre (ARC)• Amb. Prof. Iqbal Jhazbhay, Member, African National Congress (ANC) International Relations N.E.C Sub-committee• Prof. Siphamandla Zondi, head of the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria• Ms. Marianne Buenaventura Goldman, BRICSAMIT Strategy Manager, Oxfam Q & A facilitated by Dr. Philani Mthembu
11:30 – 12:00	Tea break
12:00 – 12:45	Interactive session
12:45 – 13:00	Vote of thanks and close
13:00	Lunch

About the Institute for Global Dialogue, associated with UNISA



The IGD is an independent foreign policy and diplomacy think tank dedicated to the analysis of and dialogue on global dynamics that have a bearing on South Africa in Africa. It advances a balanced, relevant and policy-oriented analysis, debate and documentation of South Africa's role in international relations and diplomacy.

The IGD's research agenda has three broad programmatic focus areas: foreign policy analysis with special reference to the making and management of foreign policy and diplomatic tools like economic, developmental, and public diplomacy; African studies focusing on the role of regional and continental integration in African politics and development as well as the study of peace diplomacy; and international diplomacy, analysing dynamics in international diplomacy that have a bearing on African peace and prosperity.

In 2010, following a strategic review the institute entered into its strategic partnership with the University of South Africa, the biggest university in the southern hemisphere to pursue through research, publications and community engagement the shared vision of a prosperous and peaceful Africa in a progressive global order.

3rd Floor Robert Sobukwe Building
263 Nana Sita Street
Pretoria South Africa
PO Box 14349
The Tramshed
0126
Pretoria South Africa
+27123376082
+27862129442
info@igd.org.za
www.igd.org.za