



BRICS Think Tank

Report of the Fifth BRICS Academic Forum (10-13 March 2013, Durban)

The inaugural session of the fifth BRICS Academic forum was opened on the 11th March with a welcome address from Dr. Diana Parker (Acting Deputy Director General of Department of Higher Education and Training) and Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele (Chief Executive Officer, Higher Education South Africa). In his inaugural address, Dr Mabelebele first outlined challenges facing BRICS countries, commented on the theme of Africa, and emphasised the need to maintain a sharp focus on a developmental and progressive agenda. He urged the audience to further reflect on the role of the Academic Forum in terms of the development and suggested some questions the Academic Forum could discuss.

This academic forum was organised around five interrelated themes: BRICS and the global economy, reform of institutions of global governance; co-operation on Africa; education, research and skills development for building industrialising economies; and peace and security. The plenary session was organised with one presentation on each theme; thereafter, parallel sessions followed, with presentations from representatives from each of the other four member countries. The recommendations on all five themes are attached as an appendix to this report.

BRICS and the Global Economy

In the first plenary session, under the theme “BRICS and the Global Economy”, Prof Ragisan Maharajh from Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa, made a presentation structured around three themes: geo-political economic transition; evolutionary economics; and emerging alternatives. Prof Maharajh illustrated the effect of structural change on the global economy, particularly in the last 30 years. This change was manifested primarily in the shrinking share of world GDP and PPP growth from the developed world and dramatic increase from emerging and developing economies (especially China and India), he observed. He then drew attention to the space opened up by this shift, which was further aided by the global economic crisis and the related debates on economic theory and alternative perspectives to prevailing neo-liberal ideas. He went on to describe a number of “concurrent crises” now afflicting the world economy – climate, energy, environment,

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financial, and food – and highlighted the challenges of accelerating growth, sustainable development, food security, and energy security. He demonstrated the extent of technological change, environmental degradation, and projected shifts in energy sources, and asked the question, “What role could BRICS play as one of the four emergent alliances (the other three being the G20, IBSA and BASIC)? Would it be an economic trade bloc? Or would it be a ‘Progressive Global Alternative’?” He proposed that the current focus should be on “evolutionary economics”, characterised by processes that transform the economy from within. These processes emerge from the activities of those who learn from their own experience and those of others, and who are capable of innovating, as well as from the diversity of individual capabilities, learning efforts. Innovative activities resulting in growth will be critical in shaping evolutionary economics. This economic alternative will be hinged upon notions of distributed economic knowledge that supports the variety of coexisting technologies, institutions, and commercial enterprises - variety which will drive competition and facilitate the discovery of better ways of doing things.

In the first parallel session, Dr Ivan Oliveira from the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), Brazil, set out to analyse the effects of the global financial and economic crisis on developing countries—especially BRICS—and the implications for BRICS cooperation on global economic governance. Dr. Oliveira started by focusing on BRICS economic data (GDP growth, investment as a percentage of GDP, inflation, per capita income (PPP), exports as a percentage of GDP, and imports as a percentage of GDP) over a ten-year (2001-2010) or a fifteen-year period (1995-2009/1996-2010). He then compared the trade figures among the BRICS countries (trade flows, manufactured goods participation in total exports, high technological intensity goods participation in total exports, manufactured goods in total exports, simple average MFN Tariff, and trade-weighted average MFN Tariff) over the fifteen-year period (1995-2009/1996-2010). He highlighted the areas in which each BRICS countries had outperformed the others – for example, China on GDP growth, investment, trade flows, exports, manufactured goods participation in total exports, and high technological intensity goods participation in total exports; India on inflation; Russia, jointly with Brazil, for manufactured goods in total imports, and on per capita income; Brazil on simple average MFN Tariff, and trade-weighted average MFN Tariff; South Africa on imports – before he went on to show BRICS’ average growth in terms of exports of services (17.5%

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over a ten-year period 2001-2010— representing more than 10% of world exports of services).

He then outlined what he termed the New Dynamic Sectors in which the BRICS countries could compete (for example, construction; computing and information technology; royalties and licencing; and personal, cultural and recreational services) and proposed further cultivation of intra-BRICS services growth in transport, travel, financial services, computing and information, and other business services. Since the World Trade Organisation (WTO) remained the central locus of cooperation on trade, he proposed that BRICS countries should work within the WTO to forge a trade agenda favourable to BRICS. He proposed the same approach within the G20. While the figures Dr Oliveira presented were incontrovertible, one participant questioned the wisdom of trying to reform the WTO from within, emphasising the need to forge preferential trade agreements outside of the WTO.

In the second parallel session, Prof Leonid Grigoryev from the Russian Energy Agency presented on the topic of reformation of the global financial architecture. Prof Grigoryev first outlined the differences among the BRICS countries: population size and concentration, proportion of the labour force with a tertiary qualification, household expenditure on food, GDP per capita, share of income by quintile, and technology development through research and development (R&D) expenditure as a percentage of GDP, percentage of the population employed in R&D, high-tech exports as a percentage of manufactured exports, number of patent applications, and other burning issues that may define a new agenda confronting BRICS. These issues include industrial production; trade balance; energy balance in Russia and in South Africa; primary energy balance; the structure of consumption by fuel; passenger cars in use per capita; passenger cars in use; defence expenditure; foreign direct investment inflows and outflows; current account balance; capital flows in emerging market economies; share of world GDP and IMF quotas; foreign exchange reserves; development bank loans allocated by sector; and the dynamic of BRICS currency rates in relation to the US Dollar.

He went on to sketch the similar concerns confronting the BRICS nations, including their place in the global economy, pathways to developed-country status, and similar social inequalities (for example, rich versus poor regions, big cities versus numerous villages, affluence versus substantial poverty). Prof Grigoryev concluded by identifying three actions

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the BRICS grouping could take to strengthen its position in the global economy: apply pressure for further reforms of voting power distribution in the IMF; strengthen the role of BRICS countries' currencies as reserve assets; and work on the establishment of formal arrangements on the structure and nature of the current global financial architecture. The reform of the global financial architecture should include the world currency system, he proposed, as well as reforming multilateral development institutions to give greater voice to developing countries, strengthening the regulation of financial markets to ensure stability of the world financial system, and building the BRICS Development Bank as a centre of knowledge production.

In the third parallel session, Mr Bandi Ram Prasad from the Financial Technologies Knowledge Management Company in India demonstrated the economic success of the BRICS bloc and the impact of the global economic downturn on its growth trajectory – that is, in terms of declining growth rates and currency volatility. The focus of his presentation was on how BRICS countries could implement policies in the wake of the global economic downturn to return to, or maintain, their growth paths. While the BRICS countries are hardly homogenous (for example, Russia's economy is commodity-driven; China is a powerhouse of exports; India's is a domestic demand-driven economy; Brazil has a highly developed economic structure; and South Africa represents the fast-growing African region), he argued that growth was "the common glue" that gave the BRICS community its power and prominence in the global economy.

Mr Prasad proposed that the BRICS countries should forge stronger links with the Next Eleven¹ and the Frontier Markets² to reduce excessive BRICS dependence on developed markets for exports. A special task force should be created within the BRICS Secretariat to engage with these countries, he suggested. In addition, the agenda for BRICS development cooperation should include: the design of safer and longer-term investments that are understandable to retail investors; the development of specialised capital markets to cater solely for the needs of small and medium enterprises; the extension of the process of listing index futures to include companies with global operations; the design of special financial instruments with sovereign guarantees to promote investment diversification; using technology to promote financial inclusion among BRICS countries; BRICS Development Bank

¹ The Next Eleven are the next eleven emerging markets identified by Goldman Sachs: Bangladesh; Egypt; Indonesia; Iran; South Korea; Mexico; Nigeria; Pakistan; Philippines; Turkey; and Vietnam.

² MSCI Barra has 26 countries classified as Frontier Markets.



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creation of institutional mechanisms to provide infrastructure financing for economic growth; and promoting greater exchange of information, knowledge skills, and expertise in

the areas of financial management, information technology, process management, financial education, and investor literacy to build the capacity needed for economic growth.

Arising out of the discussion following Mr Prasad's presentation, the session proposed the establishment of a BRICS research and data centre geared towards an annual review of economies and their finances in order to effect greater cooperation amongst BRICS countries.

In the fourth parallel session, Mr Huang Wei from the Chinese Academy of Social Science argued that the best option for BRICS countries, in the face of the challenges confronting them, was to "work together to achieve inclusive growth". Mr Wei first outlined three features of the world economy in the wake of the global economic downturn: two-speed economic growth between the G7 and the BRICS; the coexistence of larger economies and low per capita incomes; and the overlaps between evolving architectures of global economic governance. As examples, he referred to the United Nations and the global reach of summits of groupings such as the G20, G8 and BRICS; official platforms such as the G10, APEC and SCO; unofficial platforms such as the WEF and Boao Forum for Asia; regional integration organisations such as the EU, AU and ASEAN; sovereign states such as the USA and China; sub-regional organisations such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS); international institutions such as BIS, IMF, WB and WTO; multilateral development banks (MDBs) such as the Inter-American Development Bank, AfDB and ADB; and supra-national institutions such as the ECB. He depicted the top 50 world economies as a set of intersecting circles that incorporated the countries constituting the G8, BRICS, the G11, and Australia within the G20, four of the G7 countries within the European Union, and the remaining countries in the top 50 outside of these intersecting spheres [of influence].

The effect of slowing economic growth, he argued, manifested in the emergence of exchange rate protection battles between developed countries, even as they continue to determine new trade rules, for example, through the TPP and FTA. The high volatility of international capital flows was, he argued, due the spill-over effect of those countries' easing of monetary policy.

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Mr Wei then outlined three challenges facing BRICS in the short and medium term: the effect of the slow-down on economic growth; the high volatility of international capital flows; and limited resources, including energy, mineral resources, agricultural products, high quality labour, and capital. The solutions, he proposed, could be threefold: to expand the global production chain; to raise the input-output ratio; and to facilitate information transparency in resource markets and build an information-sharing centre. To be more specific, he proposed that these short- and medium-term issues could be addressed through the establishment of the BRICS Business Council, the new BRICS Bank, and a resource information-sharing centre. For the longer term, Mr Wei proposed six fundamental factors for success: competition; property protection; modern technology; a consumer market; modern medicine; and a strong work ethic – all of which had to be applied in the context of a stable and functional government. Strong, sustainable, balanced economic growth, he concluded, depended on improving the domestic economic environment, promoting and sharing science and technology, cooperation in the area of medicine, and the establishment of an education exchange project.

The ensuing discussion highlighted the importance of BRICS lending support to other developing countries, particularly through supporting their agendas in global governance structures, for example, in terms of intellectual property rights and exception to these rules. BRICS countries also need to invest in indigenous instruments to bring about innovation in the global economy, the audience proposed, for example, in traditional medicines. BRICS countries should also include observer states in future meetings of the alliance, and set up an education system to support other countries to build capacity and catch up on different capability areas, it was proposed. In this regard, the session proposed that an education system on the Chinese work ethic be devised and implemented in order to build more productive capacity and effect a paradigm shift away from productive capacity constraints such as strikes, which could tarnish a country's reputation and have direct impacts on foreign direct investment and relationship building.

Reform of Institutions of Global Governance

The plenary session on reform of institutions of global governance was presented by Ms Adriana Abdenur from IPEA, Brazil. The main focus of the presentation was an analysis of the progress on representative and fair global governance, as well as a proposal for a two-

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pronged strategy as a way forward (working simultaneously inside and outside the existing system). Ms Abdenur noted that the traditional approach of working within had ‘mixed’ effects on global institutions, citing the example of the dysfunctionality of the WTO. She outlined the twin crises of existing multilaterals, that is to say, the crises of legitimacy (because of unsatisfactory performance to address chronic challenges and crises, and insufficient representativeness that gave insufficient recognition to emerging powers) and paralysis (not being able to reform the multilaterals themselves). As the result of these crises, she argued, there had been a proliferation of plurilateral, minilateral and regional arrangements. These arrangements have been gaining strength, she said, (with their timing coinciding with the crises), and have led to multi-polarity – but also to confusion and potential negative effects for emerging economies.

She discussed the advantages and disadvantages of such structures, and proposed that BRICS should work both within the system (pushing for change) and outside (creating a parallel system). However, economic and security matters should be analysed together, she cautioned, as divorcing the two approaches could result in partial and therefore limited reform.

The questions raised from the floor included Russia’s chairmanship of the G8 and F20; the priorities of the reform agenda (given that the basis of the current global governance model is open market access); the need for indicators or a framework that did not originate in the West, for example, in the usage of the word and perspective disclosed by usage of the term “paralysis”); the contribution BRICS countries bring to the understanding of a third crisis, i.e. the ideological crisis resulting from general adoption of the neo-classical paradigm of economic growth; the ability of BRICS to speak with one voice; the role of continental organisation, and the danger of compartmentalisation within the pluralising global architecture.

Mr Paulo Esteves from IPEA responded to these questions. He elaborated on the usage of ‘paralysis crisis’, explaining that it mainly referred to the North, but also the inability among BRICS to develop consensus on a reform agenda and so to sustain reform within multilaterals. In addition, he cautioned, asymmetries within BRICS could result in the paralysis of existing institutions. He agreed with the proposal of an additional crisis, and highlighted the risks for emerging countries if multilaterals couldn’t reform—that emerging countries would not be able to use the authority of existing multilaterals to protect





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themselves. The chairperson, Mr Nikonov, from Russia, commented that the BRICS share a desire for reform (rather than revolution) and that BRICS countries are still underrepresented in international institutions.

The first parallel session received a presentation from Mr V. Davydov, with a focus on his proposal on BRICS being a new and meaningful player in global governance. He first outlined a few factors that would determine BRICS' ability to engage with other global players, including a readiness to find a common denominator; an ability to engage with established multilateral institutions; and a willingness to entrust mutual interests to the BRICS grouping. He then highlighted the need to attend to BRICS institutional form and mechanisms, particularly a virtual secretariat in the immediate term and a permanent secretariat for the future. He further proposed five priority areas that require attention: the need for more formal arrangements, instead of continuing to deal with matters in an ad hoc manner; consolidating and speeding up financial systems transformation; the need to create an information pool; the need to accelerate establishment of the BRICS development bank; and the need to provide an inspirational identity through BRICS' multi-civilisational character.

Some participants questioned BRICS' readiness for a permanent secretariat (particularly before more common projects and actions were identified and implemented) and the benefits of creating such a structure; but generally agreed with the need to prioritise the establishment of the BRICS bank as an alternative financial institution (but also as an experiment in institutionalising BRICS); BRICS' agenda on political reform (instead of merely economic governance reform) and the need for BRICS to engage with other emerging powers to increase its credibility to push for reforms.

Mr Davydov reiterated the need to focus on common ideas and goals, and on what works (instead of what does not) in order to boost collective negotiating power. Another participant asked about the factors that could speed up reform, and about BRICS' role as an evolutionary or a revolutionary organisation. "Time will tell", Mr Davydov commented. "The speed of history is picking up pace. So I'm agitating for even more."

The second parallel session was presented by Mr M.K. Venu from India. His focus was on how BRICS could take forward some important ideas outlined in the 2012 New Delhi Declaration on deeper financial and trade cooperation. More specifically, he asked how a BRICS bank could play a similar role to that played by the World Bank in post-WWII reconstruction. His main proposal was the establishment of a BRICS bank. He argued that the

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BRICS bank could enable BRICS countries to share technical expertise, offering significant advances by funding infrastructure differently from that of the World Bank with fewer macro-conditionalities and driving an agenda for a new development paradigm.

Secondly, a BRICS bank could serve as a reserve pooling system to stabilise financial markets (by holding each other's currencies, for example) and smooth over the volatility caused by international financial markets and disruption in capital flows (especially since the IMF's attention is currently preoccupied primarily with the Eurozone). He argued that this new initiative could enable these economies to understand each other's financial markets, and could also contribute to better integration and trade. Keeping a symbolic proportion of their Central Bank reserves in bonds issued by other BRICS nations could also signify a long term commitment to developing Intra-BRICS institutional arrangements, he suggested. He further proposed that, in the future, this system could be extended to trade in food items to fortify food security among BRICS.

Participants asked about the distinguishing features of a BRICS bank when compared with other MDBs/IFIs; the essential characteristics of the new development agenda; the appropriate balance between government forces and market forces; whether role of the BRICS bank should be an alternative or complement to the World Bank; and the proposed main focus of the BRICS bank.

Mr Venu reiterated the need to form a parallel institution to create bargaining power in order to push for reform, because the existing multilateral financial institutions do not operate satisfactorily. He suggested that infrastructure should remain the main focus of the BRICS bank and that it must operate on rational market principles when funding projects, with better accommodation for the longer-term returns of social infrastructure-based investments. He further emphasised the need for a stable flow of investment to developing countries (a task which the existing institutions are unlikely to be able to fulfil, given the persistent economic and financial crisis), and the need to create alternative pricing structures which will be, arguably, more market-based and less dependent on speculation than is currently the case in Western markets.

The third parallel session was presented by Mr Zou, Lixing from China, who focused on the impact of industrialisation on global governance. He used the example of climate change, the green economy (GE), and renewable energy (RE)-based economic development as

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examples to illustrate a call for new patterns of industrialisation and organisation, and new industrial and business models for innovative development.

One participant commented on the new global industrial revolution context Mr Zou alluded to and asked for his opinion of whether that would require reform of IFIs only or of other global economic and political institutions too. Mr Zou responded that technological, social and governance changes are all linked. Although the industrial and technological revolution might take another 20-50 years, the present is a good time to think about its implications which might alter current governance mechanisms and institutions.

Another participant raised a concern over land acquisition by transnational corporations in Africa – for example, hedge funds offer investment opportunities in African land – as a new issue for global governance, which, according to the participant, could lead to mass migration. The participant asked whether BRICS’ institutional arrangements would make it ready to address this issue. Mr Zou agreed that there was a need to transform governance systems for the many challenges and opportunities regional and global institutions faced.

Another participant raised a question about the sequence and primacy of the reform agenda: whether it should focus on the systems or the institutions of governance. In answering this question, Mr Zou used the metaphor of the Southern African highway as an illustration: the highway itself could help change the dynamics of interaction, just as high-tech infrastructure could alter the way one thinks about governance systems.

Mr Zou’s proposal to use the new technological revolution to reform global governance was queried: Did emerging economies have an advantage in terms of technology? In the case of RE, most development has originated in developed economies, so what role could emerging economies play in reform of the global political architecture, especially the UN and the UNSC? Mr Zou suggested that BRICS should use technology to “sidestep” traditional institutions.

Another delegate noted that Europe is developing its competitive advantage in RE and wondered how such a shift would impact on WTO rules and RE business in BRICS and the global South. Mr Zou responded that the UN is the platform to unite the South to face the new situation as it evolved.

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The fourth parallel session was presented by Ms Michelle Pressend from South Africa. She used a few examples to illustrate the intractability of challenges in transforming global governance institutions. The first related to the regulation of multinational corporations (MNCs/TNCs), particularly their role in illicit financial flows, which often surpass some countries' GDP. She mentioned the G20's and BRICS' 2011 Sanya Declaration's acknowledgment of the problem and the UN's problematic response – as work on it was moved from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to the UN Global Compact (UNGC), reflecting a downgrading from a rule-making forum to a voluntary one, where, moreover, progress was lagging, she asserted.

Her second example was the global response to climate change, which was mainly based on voluntary commitments. She outlined the challenges faced by the Green Climate Fund, which is managed by the World Bank and has become merely a new non-tariff trade barrier. She challenged the value of its potential success without fundamental change away from a consumption-driven economy mainly founded on fossil fuels, monoculture and international trade, and questioned BRICS' ability to redirect the trend. A third example was the political reform of IFIs, but which continue to operate within a neo-classical/neo-liberal paradigm. A challenge faced by South Africa faces, she argued, is the country's limited state-driven approaches for social and economic challenges, unlike other BRICS countries, which have strong state involvement in the economy. She asked whether BRICS could and should learn from the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), where decisions unfold through implementation, as opposed to a legalist approach where regulation can delay solutions.

A participant queried the distinction between BRICS' role as change agent and as a transformation agency. Maybe "transition" instead of "transformation" was more correct to describe BRICS' role so far, the participant suggested. This participant also commented that "even a weak multipolar world is better than a unipolar world, however". Other participants also commented on the need for BRICS to understand its drive for change; enquired about the relationship between the first track and second track in the BRICS discussion; and about the nature of the BRICS bank, such as the precise meaning of complementarity to the World Bank, its funding structure, and the kind of infrastructure it should fund; and the importance of people-to-people collaboration in addition to government-to-government collaboration.

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Co-operation on Africa

Dr Alexei Vasiliev, from the African Studies Institute of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences, led the discussion in the plenary session on Co-operation on Africa. He started by commenting on the impact of globalisation, its promise of development, and the dangers of its perpetuation of the West's domination in terms of its cultures, values, standards, norms, development models and social structures – often at the expense of all others that are not of Western orientation.

He highlighted the significance of BRICS' alliance with previously maligned countries that are bound by a shared experience of historical marginalisation and Western cultural, political, social and economic domination. He then reiterated the main values espoused by BRICS: humility, cultural sensitivity, tolerance and equality, and how it places great importance on the notion that "respect enables understanding". The main purpose of BRICS, he argued, should therefore be about giving recognition to BRICS members and other regions in the world, and providing a platform for them to showcase their own cultures, values and institutions. Mutual interests and mutual benefits should be the principles for engagement, and developing an alternative paradigm should be the objective of the BRICS, he asserted.

He identified Africa as a significant partner of BRICS, and underscored South Africa's strategic position as a gateway for BRICS countries to increase their involvement in the African continent. He shared his hope that, through its membership of BRICS, South Africa would also play a significant role in sharing both knowledge and expertise with fellow African states, particularly in areas of institutional and infrastructure development, and strengthening of capacity for the industrialisation process. Finally, Dr Vasiliev made a

practical proposal concerning the timing of the Academic Forum – it should take place at least two months prior to the BRICS Leadership Summit in order for its resolutions to be meaningfully included in the Leadership Summit and therefore guarantee a more direct impact on the deliberations among the leaders.

One participant cautioned against an overly-critical stance towards the West and called for a hard look within. Dr. Vasiliev responded that searching for alternatives is always complicated, but mutual respect should be the starting point. Another participant asked whether South Africa is the best facilitator for BRICS' dialogue with Africa, or whether BRICS should cooperate with individual African countries, or perhaps use the G8's approach of



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working through NEPAD when approaching Africa. Dr Vasiliev responded that South Africa should not see itself as the exclusive representative of the continent and its optimal roles should be dependent on which problems need to be resolved. Individual African countries should be allowed to represent themselves and introduce their own ideas.

The first parallel session was presented by Ms R Beri of India. Her presentation focused on India's approach to Africa, the main characteristics of the approach, and its challenges. She first recalled India's historical solidarity with Africa, for example, during the struggle for liberation from colonialism, and emphasised India's respect for Africa, with India regarding Africa as possessing all the pre-requisites for an emerging global economic growth region. India's increased involvement in Africa, she claimed, has been through co-operation and consultative engagement rather than the imposition of ideology or policy.

Outlining areas of existing and potential cooperation, she emphasised that this cooperation offers mutual benefits for both parties. She gave examples of existing commitments between India and a number of African countries forged at the last Indo-Africa summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and suggested that Africa could learn from the Indian success story.

She then identified some challenges facing the engagement, most notably, that India's foreign policy is not confined to Africa and that India is also keen on strengthening strategic relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Europe, as well as parts of Asia. Another challenge, she pointed out, was to coordinate diverse stakeholders in partnerships such as those with NGOs and the private sector. She reiterated the need to define the objectives of the existing relationship between India and Africa in order to ensure an equal, productive and mutually beneficial cooperation.

During discussions, Ms Beri sought to correct one participant's misconception that India's involvement in Africa was an "all-of-a-sudden" development. She re-stated the historical connection. Another participant noted the heightened interest in Africa by BRICS countries and suggested this is an indication of the continent becoming the new frontier for economic growth, which in turn required the continent to exhibit political leadership in order to strengthen internal capacity to positively utilise such benefits for its people. Ms Beri concurred and suggested that the task of African leadership itself, and the AU in particular, should be to ensure that economic integration within the continent as well as that bilateral partnerships with individual BRICS member states are squarely based on mutual benefits.

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The participant enquired about India's position regarding South Africa chairing of the AU vis-à-vis its membership of BRICS, and India's role in BRICS in the face of the expectation that South Africa should facilitate Africa becoming a more cohesive continent. Ms Beri responded that India is not suited to assume such a position on behalf of Africa and that India would not attempt to impose ideology, shape and direction on the AU.

The second parallel session was presented by Dr Zhu, Xiyan of the Institute of West Asia and Africa Studies (IWAAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Economic and trade relations are the pillar of strength cementing the BRICS-Africa co-operation, according to her. The African economy has generally been resilient despite recent global financial turmoil, she asserted. This, to her, was an indication of African economic stability, a necessary foundation for Africa's economic take-off. She attributed Africa's economic growth during the past decade to factors such as increased trade volume and increased foreign direct investment from BRICS member countries (most notably, China and India), and internal factors such as growing investment in Africa's energy sector, a "demographic dividend, urbanisation, construction and increasing domestic demand from the growing middle class." She cited China and India, in particular, as the leading countries in terms of visibility in Africa, having entered into numerous bilateral agreements with various African countries. She then listed areas of learning where BRICS could share with Africa, including BRICS' experiences in social development, sustainable economic growth, and regional economic integration). She concluded by calling for the creation of free trade zones throughout Africa via SADC, COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) to strengthen cohesion in, for example, transport, infrastructure and investment support.

One participant cautioned that the BRICS-Africa partnership shouldn't follow the exploitative 'paternalistic donor-recipient' model. Instead, the relationship should be based on mutual benefits among equal stakeholders. The participant also alluded to increasing consumer spending across Africa and asked what BRICS' role was in evolving 'new business models' that are geared towards leveraging increasing levels of consumption to aid economic growth. Alluding to each country's comparative advantage in different areas, for example, infrastructure for China, the transport sector for Brazil, capacity building for India, the participant further asked how BRICS countries could co-operate as a group. Responding to the question, Dr Zhu underscored China's desire to assist Africa in various aspects of development and economic growth, and the principle of China-Africa co-operation that

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prioritises mutual benefits and is aimed at contributing towards one another's deeper and clearer understanding of one another. Answering another participant's question on the number of Chinese currently in Africa, Dr Zhu gave an estimate of approximately 1 million, including workers and tourists.

The third parallel session was presented by Dr Siphamandla Zondi from the Centre for Global Dialogue in South Africa. He re-emphasised development as the focal point of co-operation and defined desired development as one based on a people-centred approach and aimed at lifting people out of poverty. Africa shared three main challenges with other Southern countries, he said: (1) the need to promote collective self-reliance, in order to realise mutual learning in addressing common challenges); (2) the need for endogenous development, with home-grown development approaches; and (3) the need to address the lack of regional integration with sufficient co-ordination. He cited examples such as The South Commission of the late 1980s to argue that South-South partnership had not succeeded in the past, mainly due to lack of South-wide institutional support.

He saluted BRICS' commitment to long-term partnership with Africa, as reflected in, for instance, repeated recommendations in previous BRICS summits of the need to deepen collaboration with Africa institutions, such as, NEPAD and the AU. These commitments have already borne fruits for the continent, he declared. He proposed that Africa should further diversify sources of aid and partnerships in order to safeguard against the risk of turbulent global financial markets. In response to a question about the most appropriate platform for BRICS to engage with Africa, Dr Zondi was forthright in recommending the AU. In his view, "those who truly support Africa should be helping to strengthen the AU." He identified the need for Africa to step up its ability to operate as a single unit, and highlighted supporting the AU as a strategic move for this purpose, whereas preoccupation with bilateral relations with individual African states could weaken it.

He noted that the new AU headquarters was built by China, but with few experts from BRICS. He challenged BRICS to clarify its views on African development and called for more support for the AU, in the form of seconding up to 10 or 20 officials from each country, for example. Dr Zondi identified several priorities for the African continent: *integration* - "a form of solidarity that African states require to address the problem of balkanisation"; *endogenous development* - people-centred development; and *reliance* - Africa should take



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ownership of the self-reliance process, although the process could also certainly be accelerated by co-operation between African states and the BRICS countries.

On the question of South Africa's involvement in Africa's development, Dr Zondi noted that African states had agreed that NEPAD would remain the continent's co-coordinating programme for development initiatives, while South Africa's involvement in Africa had emphasised providing assistance to stabilise countries emerging from conflict, such as in the DRC, Burundi and Sudan, and strengthening regional institutions like SADC, around which the AU was able to organise itself.

Mr Andre de Mello de Souza of the Institute for Applied Economic Research in Brazil led the discussion in the fourth parallel session. His presentation sought to map Brazil's increasing political and economic presence in Africa, particularly by examining the role of Brazil's development cooperation (BDC) in Africa. "To what extent could BDC be seen as a new model for development and co-operation?", he asked. Answering his own question, he first sketched the history of BDC since the 1970s, and noted the significant increase in the amount of resources made available (tripled) and number of beneficiaries in Africa, particularly since 2003 under the Lula government.

He described Brazil's historical connection with Africa since the 17th century slave trade, Brazil's strong diplomatic representation within Africa, increasing trade volumes and technical co-operation with Africa, and growing number of tri-lateral agreements with African countries, before concluding that the BRICS initiative is one way of solidifying existing cooperation. Mr De Souza identified the distinguishing principles of how BDC selects its partners and beneficiaries, which differs from other typical OECD countries: horizontal cooperation; demand-driven solutions (instead of self-proposed); mutual benefit; non-conditionality in terms of cooperation; and respect for human rights (consideration of social conditions are a prerequisite for cooperation). The areas of Brazil-Africa cooperation focus mainly on agriculture, health and education, increasingly the transfer of knowledge and skills through investment in laboratories, and replication of some of its "best practice" social policies and models. He contrasted this with China's and India's primary focus on energy and infrastructure.

Mr de Souza concluded by identifying the challenges of these development partnerships, including institutional fragmentation and lack of central planning and coordination in Brazil (which made it difficult to ensure adequate monitoring or appropriate cost-benefit analyses

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of the projects); Brazil's legislation, which hinders financing of initiatives or the hiring of personnel abroad; insufficient knowledge about Africa; and the programme's insistence that Brazil also needs to benefit from the partnership.

On the question of the origin of Brazil's interest in Africa, Mr De Souza responded that it was part of the continuation of the foreign policy of the Lula government to develop trade and economic relationships with other developing Southern countries, including Africa. In response to another question on the private sector and civil society involvement in forging cooperation, Mr De Souza cited some examples of non-state companies that have become involved in this partnership initiative, and those which had sent representatives to Africa to search for projects on which to co-operate. Another participant asked about the similarities between the approaches used by India and Brazil. Mr De Souza responded that India is involved in the energy sector, education, as well as social development issues, while Brazil also had an interest in bio-fuel and energy.

Education, research and skills development

The plenary session on education, research and skills development was presented by Dr. Rakesh Basant from the Indian Institute of Management. He started his presentation by pointing out the changing need for skills in the contemporary world, ranging from basic to complex skills that include research and innovation capabilities, as a result of the changes of economies and labour markets. Changing skills needs mean, he asserted, that education now needed to focus more on satisfying strategic needs rather than merely immediate ones. The Global Competitiveness Index demonstrates individual BRICS countries' capabilities to meet strategic needs, and highlights a number of areas where mutual learning from better-performing countries in the bloc could take place, including literacy and health status, number and quality of engineering and manufacturing training, ways to gain practical experience, graduation of PhD candidates, and number of professors with PhD.

He presented figures for R&D spending and outcomes and suggested that innovation should include not only products and processes, but also training and technology preparedness, and that educational institutions had an important role to play in innovation. Lastly, he proposed some collaboration opportunities between BRICS countries.

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One participant cautioned about the potential methodological and conceptual inadequacy of the index used in the presentation and asked how certain terms (such as elite and non-elite institutions) were defined. Another participant asked for comments on how to balance immediate needs and strategic needs in curricula. Another wondered whether there existed indicators to assess 'perception and reality' aspects of skills. Dr. Basant explained the terms in question and agreed on the need to re-think the indicators, especially those coming from the developed countries. He reiterated the need to diversify skills, the need for broader indicators for innovation and the need to pay attention to market mismatch. He explained that immediate needs were usually (albeit not always perfectly) satisfied by the market demand, but that the market is not enough for strategic needs. This called for the state's intervention at both ends, he concluded.

The first parallel session heard a presentation by Mr Yiguo Liu, from the Central Institute for Vocational and Technical Education in China, on the vocational and technical education system in China. He first outlined some challenges facing the system, namely, the divides between urban and rural, between coastal and inland, and the poor communication between these areas.

After providing background information on the Chinese system, he introduced the main focus of the presentation: to illustrate China's approach to improving education quality in the sector. Mr Liu elaborated on what China has attempted and the results, using the four key elements he identified as a guide: setting teaching standards among and across different specialisations and specialisation clusters; availability of teachers; better school-enterprise cooperation; and integration of the whole system, including attention to issues such as recruitment, graduate employment, college reform, improving transition from school to post school system, and the usage of demonstration colleges. He concluded by suggesting there is a need to strengthen cooperation and pay better attention to the economic factors involved.

Questions from the floor mainly centred on the role of private enterprise in the sector, the approach China used to motivate students to enter the system instead of remaining unemployed, the structure used for the transition from school to vocational college and university (articulation), and the factors used to choose a specialisation. Mr Liu responded that private enterprises in China are involved in the sector training body; students' enrolment in the sector is almost automatic if they fail to qualify for university, although there seems to be a general interest in learning practical and useful skills – a match to what

the vocational system offers; that smoothing articulation is in progress; and that the decision about the specialisation is mainly based on market demand and are seldom decided on vocational analysis alone. Mr Liu encouraged the use of special economic zones in South Africa to encourage students to enter into the vocational system.

Further questions were on the difference between vocational school goers and university goers, the difference between vocational school goer and secondary school goers, and the state of vocational teacher training in China, especially in terms of its linkage to work-based experience. Mr Liu replied that both the vocational and university systems were needed in China because they served different purposes; there was a changing yet still mandatory rule that in China one needs to receive vocational education if one could not go to secondary school. In terms of the linkage to work-based experience, China differentiates between teachers who teach public courses and special skills courses, and requires those who teach

special skills courses to have relevant work experience, although not all have it as yet. The audience further proposed a BRICS project on vocational and technical training, and recommended establishment of a community of practice on vocational training led by China, with better attention paid to post-school transitions.

The second parallel session heard a presentation by Volker Wedekind from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, on an analysis of the South African skills landscape. He gave a brief history of education and training during apartheid, as a separate system to the academic stream, based on a system of technical colleges and apprenticeships, and the difficulty of moving between systems, and the design of the post-Apartheid system, led by the National Qualifications Framework, which focused on integration and re-organisation of different sectors of general schooling, Further Education and Training (FET) colleges and universities. Because of the change in focus, however, the process led to gaps between the vision and reality, uneven development across different sectors, knock-on effects on other parts of the system and, thus, systemic inequality. These gaps have produced systemic tensions, he noted, compounding the global economic crisis, limited workplace opportunities, the changing nature of work, and the lack of interest from youngsters in technical work.

He then illustrated the challenges per sector. In terms of the TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) and FET sector, he noted on-going reform (mainly sector-based, i.e. Sectoral Education and Training Authorities - SETAS); challenges regarding the SETA levy;



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uneven skill shortage reporting; and insufficient teachers with industry experience, but also some encouraging factors, such as renewed interest in TVET. In terms of the university system, he reported on progress, increased enrolment for instance, and challenges, including the greater amount of R&D expenditure outside universities; the university system locked in the Anglophone world view; the growing number of youngsters not in education, employment or training; low economic growth – below levels at which one could create employment; jobless growth; and continuing skills shortages despite large sums of money available for training.

He offered explanations for some of the challenges as: a lack of trust in the system; a neo-liberal narrative that assaulted public education and precipitated on-going crises, poor infrastructure, service delivery and resourcing, which often resulted in an increase in strikes. He suggested that future priorities should be better and integrated labour market

intelligence; building of new post-school system models that emphasised vocational education; differentiated pathways; and forming a better understanding of complex systems and nuanced interventions. He proposed that the BRICS grouping could provide venues for comparative studies in post-school education systems and methodological debates for socially engaged research, and called for BRICS research funding to facilitate scholarship and bursary programmes and exchanges of research fellows. He also proposed that more attention be paid to issues of language, culture and education, promotion of open access publications, and linkages among academic associations.

A participant agreed with his suggestion about increased scholarly exchanges and proposed the concept of a BRICS University. Another participant commented on the jobless graduate and skills shortage phenomenon in South Africa, and asked how one could address one possible reason for this phenomenon, namely, that South Africa employers do not want to train unskilled labour. Another asked about the preparedness of South African students for an industrialising economy, and commented on ways to sustain traditional culture and the relevance of the changes in apprenticeships.

Mr Ivor Baatjes, from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, highlighted the large number of South Africans outside the formal economy who often feel dislocated. As a society, he suggested, we should understand that many of them are not idle; they are engaged in activities that are socially and even economically useful.

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Other BRICS collaboration possibilities were raised, addressing issues such as how to improve basic and vocational skills, how to improve quality and quantity in English skills in non-elite institutions, how to correct labour market distortions which could result in skills-gaps, and how to make universities the centrepiece of the national innovation system by experimenting with financial options for research and models of enterprise creation, etc.

Volker responded that training does happen in companies but often without certification, and that companies also tend not to report such training as the skills levy can then be written off directly [i.e. by the SETAS, without first being paid out to the company]. Availability of apprenticeships is restricted in South Africa, he observed, and is mostly limited to the field of engineering. He suggested that the definition of industrialisation in South Africa should include agriculture and other elements of the 'developmental state'. Lastly, he agreed that culture is a rich resource, important for both indigenous knowledge systems and tourism.

The third parallel session, which dealt with trends in training and research, was presented by Paulo A. Meyer Nascimento from IPEA, Brazil. The first part of his presentation discussed

BRICS' contribution to global labour supply, measured through figures such as gross enrolment ratios on tertiary education; distribution of university degrees by disciplines; evolution of tertiary education indicators; proportion of engineering graduates employed in engineering-related jobs; and number of engineering graduates.

The second part of his presentation considered publication and scientific output, both in terms of quantity (share of journal articles in various disciplines) and quality (impact relative to subject area). He concluded by pointing out the disciplines in which each country has relative strengths. South Africa: microbiology, clinical medicine and immunology; Brazil/India/China: engineering, maths and physics; and Russia: maths and physics.

The questions posed addressed mainly the technicalities of his presentation, for instance, his figures; whether the papers were sole authored or joint papers; whether patents were considered [when measuring output and impact]; where the graduates were employed; the database(-s) used (non-English and non-Thompson scale), and so on. Nascimento urged that BRICS researchers should establish their own research space, which would enable them to publish in an environment where the assessment of their work was not so subject to current Western norms of rating the impact of research.

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The fourth parallel session was presented by Mr Alexander Lukin, Vice-Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation. He started by pointing out a contradiction he had noted between criticising the West and consistently applying Western methodology and frameworks. He questioned where exactly BRICS could position itself as an alternative. He started his argument by urging a new round of interrogation of the development goals. Unlike hundreds of years ago when the goal of development was more spiritual, he claimed, the contemporary role of governments had been mainly to satisfy material needs. Education has largely followed a similar path. He then noted the success of some BRICS countries that have strong non-materialistic cultures, and suggested that a re-focusing of the development role could be viewed as an alternative to Western values and methodologies.

He illustrated his thesis by reference to the Russian case, describing Russian education reform and outlining its challenges: that is to say, Russia should have removed Marxist ideology from the education system and not interfered with the structure; issues of the Bologna system and “competencies”; reliance on the internet; cultural notions such as independent student work are not adopted in Russia; issues about free education; imported exams from the United States; and the rejection of Russia’s proposal to BRICS regarding more cultural co-operation. He proposed the following as the focus of further BRICS collaboration on education/culture/science:

- Establish a consultative council of BRICS (comprised of prominent intellectuals from each country);
- Establish an ethical code for BRICS, based on the joint civilisations of groups;
- Develop a formal basis (for example, a signed agreement) for cultural co-operation;
- Encourage more exchange among scientists, researchers, professors and students;
- Establish co-operation with civil society (between NGO, think tanks, CBOs, students);
- Establish contact among religions;
- Conduct studies of languages;
- Create “information space” as an alternative to orthodox spaces; and
- Increase exchange in sports.

On the question of the distinction between cultural, spiritual, educational, and material wellbeing, Lukin answered that there was no contradiction. He reiterated that materialism was a legitimate goal but should not be the only goal. The future could be impoverished if materialism only were pursued, he claimed. The second question was also about

instrumentalism in education: whether one should do away with it. Lukin responded that one should not fight it but that it could not be the only goal, and that the rights of people who want to study as a goal, not as a means, should also be protected.

Peace and Security

The plenary session on peace and security heard a presentation by Mr Ji, Ping, from the China Foundation for Peace and Development. He first located his argument and proposal amidst challenges from two fronts: innate deficiency caused by the rules of compromise and balance; and external constraints caused by divergent and natural tendencies to pursue national interests.

His primary thesis was a proposal to establish a new security model founded upon the principles of equality, mutual trust, cooperation, policy coordination and innovation. More specifically, he called for more focus on the potential role of international NGO in peace and security matters within BRICS. NGOs, he argued, could utilise civilians' often more accepting attitude towards NGO intervention; bypass the volatility of the local political economy; and enrich the inter-government structure of BRICS.

The discussion that followed focused largely on his international NGO proposal, highlighting BRICS' principle of respect for sovereignty; the potential internal conflicts between NGOs and the state; the different paradigms of security and the economy, which render it more difficult to achieve win-win outcomes on security; the need to balance between working with regional groupings and working with BRICS; and the history of lack of a coherent voice among BRICS members on security matters.

Mr Ji responded that his NGO proposal was of more of a theoretical rather than practical nature. He gave examples of different peace-keeping NGOs, which already exist in BRICS countries, and their various collaborations. Concerns over cyber security were raised by another participant. Mr Ji proposed this as an area of universal concern among BRICS, an issue tackled through this multilateral platform rather than through bilateral platforms.

The first parallel session on Peace and Security received a presentation by Dr Buntu Siwisa, from the African centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), South Africa.

He started his presentation with some retrospective questions about BRICS: what it is not, what it should be, and the challenges of consistency and continuity. He reiterated that the institutional challenges facing BRICS resulted from the principle of respect for sovereignty, different geo-strategic interests, and a preference for conflict resolution, particularly in the case of South Africa and Africa, through traditional regional blocs.

He highlighted the interconnectedness of today's security threats and listed the BRICS peace challenges as recognised by BRICS National Security Advisors (namely, international terrorism; cyber terrorism; piracy; and regions such as Mali, Syria and Libya). He proposed that improved youth employment could be used to reduce the recruitment drive of international terrorist organizations. He noted that traditional Western peace building was moving toward the logic of military drive-down; that the UN framework alone was inadequate in dealing with organised crime; and that there was a need for cross-sectoral engagement that better acknowledged the inter-connectedness of conflict management. He highlighted the new trend in Peace and Security towards greater recognition of the role of the private sector (who often have access to powerful stakeholders), as well as civil society.

Mr Vladimir Orlov, the chairperson, proposed focusing on a shift from challenges to strengths, and from conflicts to conflict resolution through building elements of cooperation. He also proposed the establishment of an international advisory group to maintain an international security index. One participant agreed with the need to measure security internationally, but asked whether the timing was right. He further questioned the state-centric conception of security and proposed a broader conceptualisation of security that encompasses a wider range of human security issues, such as water, food, the environment and health security.

Another participant questioned the correctness of emphasising the regional lens in examining peace and security issues, as this has not necessarily applicable to all BRICS countries (that BRICS may be seen as an alternative 'region' by some BRICS members). It was also proposed that democratic governance issues should be included as another dimension of security. Dr Buntu Siwisa agreed that both human and state conceptions of security needed to be taken into account.

The second parallel session hosted Mr Rodrigo de Moraes, from IPEA, Brazil. He examined military expenditure and military equipment procurement expenditure in BRICS in comparison to that in six NATO countries (US, France, UK, Germany, Japan, Italy), and noted

the increased military expenditure among BRICS countries (a reversed trend in comparison to the NATO countries). He suggested that the economic crisis was one possible reason for the decline in NATO military expenditure and pointed out the opportunities that the reversed trend offered: reduced gap in military capacity; bigger military purchasing bargaining power; more pressure for BRICS to expand its role in international peace issues (including sharing information); and increased opportunity to cooperate with NATO (and its defence industries).

In the discussion, it was pointed out that NATO was a military alliance, while BRICS was not. Most of the discussion focused on the important yet inadequate examination of expenditure numbers without sufficient attention to the qualitative information often hidden behind them. One participant reminded the audience that US military expenditure included a high percentage spent on military R&D, which was not the case with other countries. This, according to this participant, might have a significant implication for the future of military capacity and the further widening of the generational gap between military capacities. He also highlighted the need to differentiate between domestic and international military procurement, as well as the different possible motives for increased expenditure, such as to maintain domestic military industries. Another participant questioned the appropriateness of combining BRICS countries' military expenditures given their different natures and reasons for military expenditure. Another asked for comments on BRICS' approach to using hard or soft power capabilities. De Moraes agreed with the critiques and suggestions about further examination of the numbers. In terms of the difference between soft and hard power, he responded that the preference for hard or soft power was usually determined by individual countries. For example, Brazil traditionally relied more on soft power, while Russia had depended on hard power.

The third parallel session heard from Prof. Vyacheslav Nikonov from Russia. He diverged from his submitted paper for the forum and instead posed 15 questions for debate:

1. Does UN reform have a coherent meaning in various discussions? Do Russia and China support South Africa, India and Brazil? How does one deal with other opponents to their candidacy, (i.e. France and Japan?)
2. Rule of international law: how should BRICS respond to any infractions of international law? Should BRICS condemn all violations? Is BRICS capable of it?
3. Arms race: is it a good thing for BRICS to engage in the arms race? Is there a prospect of coherent military planning?

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4. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD): does BRICS want to keep the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)? Should India be brought in? Is India interested in joining?
5. US Global Missile Defence: How should BRICS react, given that it poses a potential threat to Russia and China? Is BRICS prepared to object to the expansion of global and national missile defence?
6. Arms control: are India and China interested in arms control?
7. Militarisation of space: should BRICS be against it outright or should it aim at maintaining the balance? If balance is the aim, however, one still has to keep it up – implying that Russia must follow the US into space. So the question ultimately becomes how one can stop the US' motivation and initiative to expand.
8. International terrorism: it is getting worse in Eurasia. It could expand to BRICS countries. What is the strategy?
9. Shanghai Security Cooperation Organisation: Is it viable? Should India be included?
10. Cyber security: should BRICS be satisfied with the status of the internet as an 'American NGO' that no others have a say in it? Is it possible to reach agreement on cyber security control? Is there a need for a cyber non-proliferation treaty?
11. Right to protect (R2P): Does BRICS support it? Is BRICS ready to protect minorities if there is conflict between them and the majority population in that country?
12. Syria: Does BRICS have a peace plan? Should peace keeping missions in Syria operate under the UN?
13. Iran/North Korea and nuclear proliferation: what is BRICS's position? What could be a viable joint strategy?
14. Afghanistan: what is the post-2014 strategy after US retreats?
15. Will joint consultation on security by BRICS be possible?

One participant reminded the audience that BRICS is not confrontational and the questions posted above are largely confrontational, so he questioned whether this was the right platform for them. He then highlighted the militarisation of the African continent as another area of concern and proposed post-conflict reconstruction and development as the two areas where BRICS could cooperate constructively. He further proposed clustering the abovementioned themes into groups so that the appropriate institutions could be located to tackle them. This proposal was seconded and a further proposal was made to construct a list of all peace and security concerns, from which one then chooses the ones of mutual concern.

Another participant acknowledged BRICS' limitations and the constraints on cooperation in peace and security, but advocated looking for commonalities and areas where cooperation was possible. Her suggestion was seconded by many other participants. For example, one

participant restated the distinction between traditional and non-traditional security and suggested using non-traditional security issues—the broadened [human] security concern—to unify BRICS’ position on peace and security. Another participant agreed and further proposed domestic security (such as crime) as another potential area for intra-BRICS security cooperation.

Giving an example of exploring training platforms in peace and security, through such activities as summer schools, one participant proposed interrogating different themes alongside one another for potential synergy. Another further reminded the audience that security must be framed within the aim of development.

The fourth parallel session was presented by Dr. Varun Sahni from India. He started by examining the reasons why states group themselves together: to aggregate power; to solve problems; and to build community. He argued that building a peace community is a long term goal and can’t be achieved overnight. He then pointed to World War II as the last time when BRICS countries aggregated, in addition to two smaller grouping afterwards – Russia and China before they split; Russia and India 1971-1991. Therefore, he concluded, problem-solving remained the most realistic reason for the BRICS grouping. He further proposed ten areas of potential shared interest, in addition to the four that were listed by the BRICS National Security Advisers (mentioned in Dr. Buntu Siwisa’s presentation).

1. R2P: Is there any new thinking on this concept? Brazil has come up with *Responsibility While Protecting* (RWP). But RWP is more concerned with the question of how war is conducted (*jus in bellum*, justice in war) rather than going to war or not (*jus ad bello*, justice at war). So, while important, it does not assist in taking forward the R2P question.
2. UN Security Council reform: The veto power for permanent seats has served to prevent systemic war. How does one mark the arrival of great powers now that the annihilative power of systemic war is gone/obviated by the operation of the veto power? Key institutions, including the UNSC, need to be reminded that keeping states with systemic impact (or potential impact) out of the institution may lead to the irrelevance of international organizations over time.
3. Disarmament diplomacy: The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has been dead for 17 years, deadlocked mainly for procedural (need for consensus) and substantive



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- reasons. Could BRICS do something about this, such as pre-negotiations outside of CD?
4. Space: A code of conduct for space is necessary. All (bar Russia) are late entrants to space, so shared interest in this domain is a possibility. Even Russia and the U.S. might have a common interest in this. The EU code of conduct could be used as a reference. Issues need to be included are: space debris; squatters rights; satellite slots allocation; and so on;
 5. Nuclear terrorism and nuclear de-alerting: it is necessary to prioritise the UN as a provider of global public security in this regard. What is BRICS' position?
 6. Drones (technology and warfare): does BRICS have a position on the replacement of humans with machines?
 7. Military goods could be used for civilian purposes. For example, a Navy could be seen as provision of public goods (surveying and patrolling common sea) beyond its military defence purposes if different countries, for instance India and China, could reach agreement on joint missions to use it patrolling international sea.
 8. Peacekeeping: Is there a possibility of a BRICS standby force?
 9. Afghanistan: three out of five BRICS countries have a vested interest in this region. Is there any thinking within BRICS around the post-2014 strategy?
 10. Epidemics and Pandemics: AIDS, for example, should be seen as a security issue.

One participant pointed back to the African agenda. Each BRICS country has significant interests in Africa; Africa dominates the global/UN security agenda. The question was what BRICS was willing to pay for stability in Africa. Another participant applauded Dr Varun's list as doable, as all countries have interests in these issues. She also agreed with the importance of the space debris issue. Another also agreed about the importance of including the space debris (space code of conduct) and pandemics issues into the security discussion, but questioned whether much could be done about the Conference on Disarmament. One participant alluded to disaster preparedness as another matter that deserves attention and the need for a BRICS platform to tackle similar issues incapable of resolution by bilateral arrangements. Another pointed to the need to engage not only powerful players but also those that have the potential to become powerful. He highlighted SA's competitiveness in peace and security in conflict resolution.

Dr Varun agreed with most of the comments. In response to the question about the African agenda, he emphasised that BRICS must support decisions taken by existing regional and continental bodies. He finished with an encouraging prediction that wars would become obsolete over time, a prediction supported by evidence from the history of humanity.