

BRICS 2018



South Africa's BRICS Presidency 2018: An Inclusive Path towards Global Development

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

16 February 2018, Johannesburg



**South African
BRICS Think Tank**

Rapporteur: Arina Muresan, *Researcher at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA*

Notes by: Wayne Jumat, *Research Assistant at the Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA*

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

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

Cover image by: *Institute for Global Dialogue associated with UNISA*

Published in May 2018 by the 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.

Contents

List of acronyms and abbreviations.....	iv
Note on the contributors.....	v
Introduction	6
Keynote Address.....	7
Discussants.....	9
Question and answer session.....	12
Conclusions and way forward.....	15
Appendices: Programme.....	16
About the Institute for Global Dialogue, associated with UNISA.....	17

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACCORD	African Center for the Consecutive Resolution of Disputes
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CODESRIA	Council of Social Science Research Development in Africa
COP	United Nations Climate Change Conference
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DST-NRF	Department of Science and Technology – National Research Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HPI	Happy Planet Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IERI	Institute for Economic Research on Innovation
IGD	Institute for Global Dialogue
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NIHSS	National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences
NRF	National Research Fund
NSTF	South Africa National Science and Technology Forum
R&D	Research and Development
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UFS	University of Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Note on the contributors

Keynote address



NIHSS Board Chairperson, Professor Ari Sitas, is the head of the University of Cape Town's Sociology Department. A scholar of sociology and political philosophy, he was a founder member of Junction Avenue Theatre Company. He has received numerous accolades for artistic works including an Olive Schreiner Award for his play *Randlords and Rotgut*. He is also a celebrated poet. He has held numerous prestigious positions including a Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and a Guest Professorship at the Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg. He currently serves as a South African representative on the BRICS Think Tanks Council. Prof Sitas has been a senior fellow and research associate in a number of institutions including the University of California, Berkeley, Ruskin College and Oxford University. He is a past president of the South African Sociological Association, a Vice-President of the International Sociological Association and an Executive member of the African Sociological Association. He serves on the Board of the Chris Hani Institute and currently directs a Department of Science and Technology Grand Challenge Research programme on African Diasporas and Migrations; the award-winning Global Studies Masters Programme inaugurated between Germany, South Africa and India and a variety of joint research projects with international colleagues. His recent publications include: *The Ethic of Reconciliation*, Durban and New Delhi, Madiba Press, 2007; *The Mandela Decade-Labour Culture and Society in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2010; principal author of *Gauging and Engaging Deviance, 1600-2000*, New Delhi: Tulika Press, 2014.

Respondents:



Dr. Aquina Thulare is a medical practitioner but currently holds the position of Technical Specialist on Health Economics for the National Health Insurance (NHI) in the Department of Health. Her responsibilities are in the areas of policy and legislative development as well as the development of the implementation plan for the NHI. She previously held the position of Secretary General of the South African Medical Association (SAMA). She formerly also held the position of deputy chairperson of the South African Medical and Dental Practitioner's Association (SAMDP). Aquina is still a Lieutenant Colonel of the Reserve Force in the Military Health Services of the South African National Defence Force as well as a member of the Reserve Force Council (RFC). She is a member of the Medical and Dental Board (MDB) of the HPCSA and is the chair of the Practice Committee of the outgoing MDB.



Ms. Sanusha Naidu is a foreign policy analyst and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Global Dialogue. Her research interests include Democratisation in Africa; Africa's Political Economy and Development; Africa's relations with Emerging Powers from the South (BRICS and IBSA); South African Foreign Policy Analysis; and the role of track two diplomacy in International Relations. Ms Naidu has a Masters in International Relations from the University of Staffordshire, United Kingdom. She has previously worked at the Centre for Conflict Resolution based in Cape Town and managed the South African Foreign Policy Initiative (SAFPI) at the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. In the past several years Ms Naidu has also managed a programme that focused on Africa's international relations with China and Emerging Powers based at Fahamu from 2008-2010. She has an extensive publications record which includes two edited volumes on Africa-China relations: *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*, Pambazuka Press, September 2010 (co-editors: Axel Harneit-Sievers and Stephen Marks; and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon? Africa and China*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008 (co-editor: Kweku Ampiah). Ms Naidu is a regular media commentator national and international issues for major news agencies including Al-jazeera News, CCTV, BBC Radio, SABC, and CBS Africa. She is also a regular analyst on South Africa's domestic politics and electoral trends.

Introduction

Dr. Philani Mthembu, Executive Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), opened the dialogue by providing a brief review of South Africa's diplomatic calendar for 2018, which is one of the busiest in the post-1994 era. The BRICS partnership, one of several foreign policy agenda items, has continued to evolve as it enters the beginning of its second decade. BRICS is no longer just a high-level government-to-government partnership; it has grown to include numerous tracks of diplomacy and increasingly put an emphasis on the importance of people-to-people relations through track two (think tanks and business) and track three (civil society) diplomacy.

This partnership holds symbolic and practical significance to the developing world as these economies are actively pursuing global reform. While China has now coined the term 'BRICS Plus', it should not be forgotten that the spirit of moving towards a more inclusive BRICS partnership was initiated at South Africa's first hosting of the BRICS summit in Durban 2013, where it invited African members for the duration of the Summit. Following that Summit, every other BRICS country has invited other countries in their respective regions and beyond. In 2014, when Brazil hosted the Summit it invited regional partners, in 2015 when Russia hosted the Summit it organised it alongside the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union, when India hosted it in 2016 it invited the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries, and when China hosted it in 2017 it not only invited regional partners, but countries from across the world.



This shows a clear chronology of the BRICS outreach initiative, and how it has developed since South Africa hosted the BRICS Summit in 2013. It also shows that South Africa has played a role as a norm entrepreneur and getting some of its ideas accepted within BRICS. Given that decisions are taken via consensus, this guarantees that every member effectively has a veto, which adds to South Africa's ability to influence internal BRICS processes. Indeed it should also be acknowledged that the institutionalisation of the BRICS Think Tanks Council and involvement of civil society in the partnership were priority areas of the South African delegation. This particular policy dialogue launched the South African BRICS Think Tanks discussions on South Africa's 2018 presidency of BRICS and the need to move in a direction of inclusive development.

Keynote Address

Prof. Ari Sitas' presentation, titled "Reconfiguring the World System: Envisioning Inclusive Development through a Socially Responsive system", explained that the role of the SABTT during South Africa's presidency was to discuss the BRICS research agenda going forward, but that this was also an opportunity to introspect since South Africa's 2013 Chairship of BRICS. South Africa had lobbied for a few key initiatives such as the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and BRICS Plus, which particularly petitioned the inclusion of African countries. Moreover, the South African government has taken the BRICS project and involved all departments in working towards the partnership, and joint activities between partnering universities have increased manifold.

The SABTT and other think tanks are working within the Track II diplomatic stream and partnering with academics and other research institutions, government departments like the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the Department for Higher Education and Training (DHET), and linking to the ministerial committee of BRICS. In addition, the SABTT works closely with the BRICS Business Council, Civil BRICS, as well as anticipating the formation of a Labour forum for BRICS. The SABTT is vested in consulting with various stakeholders and whatever is discussed and proposed must be debated in the BRICS think tank domain. The SABTT is made up of diverse national priorities and is governed by a consensus process.



South Africa is taking the lead at a time where the world economy has slowed down. The 2017 summit was a decisive year, President Xi Jinping called for everyone to be responsive to the 'new normal', where high speed growth would translate to high quality growth in science, technology and innovation that particularly focuses on the public benefit. South Africa's role in taking on the chairship of BRICS would be to contribute to the spirit of public benefit through innovation. This think tanks' theme, *envisioning inclusive development through a socially responsive economy*, thus aims to contribute to the new development paradigm thinking.

The BRICS cohort of governments, as well as other cooperation clubs from the global South, started working together as emerging powers because the existing international architecture could not acknowledge the demand for change within the global economic system. Since the Ufa Summit in Russia, in 2015, BRICS countries sought more from their partnership and geostrategic potential in the world, which can be considered a vision, or contribution, to reconfigure the world system. And despite the negativity of thought leaders from the North, the BRICS group persists and continues with its projects, which are increasing exponentially.

South Africa's focus is thus not just what can be gained from BRICS, but more importantly, what can be brought to the BRICS agenda. The SABTT research agenda will focus on 4 pillars;

Firstly, bringing about economic prosperity based on principles of inclusivity, which needs to come through in the partnership and regional outreach. This pillar incorporates the following 5 initiatives:

- Creating a BRICS network of smart manufacturing hubs.
- Identifying and resourcing complementarities such as government-to-government and public-private partnerships in developing institutions that accompany and compliment the growth of human capital.

- Food security and questions of fundamental nutrition and uses of land, which are driven by Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises (SMMEs).
- An Africa-SADC academy of beneficiation focused on moving away from extractive industries and honing in on developing robust and diverse industries and economies in a responsible manner.
- Social protection, universal health coverage and bio-ethical research, such as the BRICS Vaccine centre, will contribute to successful models of employment, education and upliftment out of poverty.

Secondly, the next pillar is based on prioritising the productive and scientific sectors, which entails strengthening the BRICS university and post school systems and fostering creative areas of cooperation, which ultimately inspire unique technologies and innovation. Through the BRICS universities, think tanks and other academic endeavours, it will be possible to contribute to solid exchange programmes, common courses, and priority areas of joint research and sharing of information.

- In terms of the fourth industrial revolution, the BRICS are able to make significant contributions to astrophysics and space research, as well as artificial intelligence.
- The BRICS domain will be developing a joint Research & Development platform and look for joint research to be stimulated.
- Next, literacy and numeracy core teacher development programmes and a BRICS digital heritage platform in cooperation with UNESCO and other organisations will be established.
- In terms of arts and culture, the BRICS are establishing rotating retreats of composers, artists, writers and musicians.

The third pillar is based on peace building and peace keeping in order to contribute to socio-economic progress by reducing the moral deficit within the existing world system.

- The BRICS want to establish a BRICS academy of conflict resolution and strategic studies, in order to contribute towards conflicts management.
- Next, to establish an institute of advanced studies for the study of Africa, Latin America and Asian relations that allow these continents to cooperate on a long term basis.



And the last pillar is based on the commons; by enhancing endogenous biodiversity and integrity, it is possible to nurture responsible forms of development, strengthen green technologies and sustainable development, and prioritise indigenous knowledge systems.

- Working together to develop smart early warning climate technologies. Addressing climate issues timeously will have an immense impact on the health of societies and countries' economies.
- Emphasising the impact of the green economy and resilient eco-systems networks will be prioritised.

- Converting cities into living cities, where there are common projects for urban renewal, where citizens can experience a decent life.

To conclude, it is up to the BRICS in their evolution to say whether the partnership is a developmental pact or a growth alliance in shaping the world's future. There was a moment in history, between the 1970s and 1980s, where countries that were prioritising their endogenous forms of knowledge, decided to open up to the world and the world market; the problems they encountered in spite of their differences started bringing these countries together. Thus, we are living through an epochal change similar to the 1400s to 1500s that saw the gradual ascendance of the West and gradual evolution of the rest, even though the civilizations of the East had already begun an industrious period. Throughout history to the present day, it is possible to see how the world was structured according to dominant actor's preferences and material capabilities, culture, education, science and technology. Prof. Sitas asked how the global reconfiguration will give the developing world, Africa in particular, the opportunity to harness its potential. In order to answer this question, it is important to work within and investigate these issue areas further.

As a think tank, it is not important to report the good story or narratives of success only, but rather reflect on alternatives, policy priorities and the complexities of cooperation between very diverse BRICS partners. Prof. Sitas closed by explaining that much still needs to be done in order to achieve the various milestones. In quoting the late South African poet, Keorapetse William Kgositse, "I know that it is always possible to do more of what you must do and to do it better, always because the difference that a day might make celebrates the day that makes the difference", and the late Nelson Mandela, "It always seems impossible until it's done", he encouraged all to make an impact.



Discussants

Dr. Aquina Thulare

Health is a fundamental requirement for prosperity and development, moreover for inclusive development through inclusive policy making and execution as it is important for a productive and healthy economy. A population that is excluded on the basis of access to health care will not be able to contribute to an economy and thus be excluded further from economic participation. BRICS countries face a number of health related challenges; for example the burden of disease, such as Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, or poorly structured health systems, such as human resource shortages and health financing.

Diseases and health care deficits thus affect the poor at unparalleled levels. The most prominent example of global health risks is that of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2013. It was a clear indication that health systems were not equipped to deal with and respond to an epidemic of this scale. During this time, the international responses showed how different countries approached the crisis; for example, China had sent health workers, whereas the West had a larger focus through their militaries. South Africa was required to ensure that the human resources, equipment and auxiliary support was taken to the affected countries. An outbreak of this size was caused by a number of factors that could have been prevented, it is clear that addressing public health care systems is key to future development.

The BRICS countries are addressing health care through various permutations that are unique to the partners. Health ministers have agreed to start gaining more ground in achieving universal health coverage, a policy that has been endorsed within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Goal Three and Target 6.8 specifically. Having agreed to this, it is important to take a number of lessons from each of the BRICS partners on social protection. Brazil's programmes on social protection, such as Bolsa Familia and others, are complimentary and link health care to other services, and China, India and Russia have matured and advanced research in health systems. Therefore it is important to collaborate and take advantage of their advantages. It will be important to follow South Africa's work on a possible vaccine for HIV, where health care experts have not yet been able to make the necessary break through. However, South Africa has prioritised the vaccine initiative through the BRICS partnership and the movement towards universal health coverage, as one of the pathways to ensure that the strain on the health and welfare system is reduced but also to ensure that responses address actual inclusive development.



Another element to the health care system discussion is traditional medicines; 85% of the South African population uses traditional medicine. However, there has not been any progress made to include this in the mainstream of the health industry. A risk remains that the traditional medicine practitioners and producers, as an industry, could be displaced by big pharmaceutical companies through bio-prospecting and bio-pirating. This is an opportunity to engage traditional practitioners and healers in formalising this space. This would address any exclusionary affects, but also promote indigenous knowledge systems. By prioritising this space, it would be possible to prioritise a majority of the population who often only have access to these health spaces. China and India are advanced in terms of including their traditional medicines in the mainstream sphere, as well as advancing westernised health related technologies, which lightens the burden of providing universal health coverage. A South African input to this discussion is to contribute and understand wellness indicators for BRICS countries and to make the necessary choices for our unique circumstances. Another major challenge adding to the complexity of health financing and budgets in the world is intellectual property in the pharmaceutical industry, which exacerbates costs. To conclude, Dr. Thulare emphasised that the chosen theme of inclusivity is critical, and that these discussions may provide an excellent opportunity to debate ideas further.

Ms. Sanusha Naidu

Ms. Naidu began by providing a global context of the BRICS dynamics and explaining how the BRICS Think Tank and academic community had developed over the years. Ms. Naidu's presentation centred on the question - How do you conceptualise BRICS in the 21st Century? The international system that we exist in can be seen as constantly evolving or a moving target. As a moving target, it is important to find and project your geopolitical role, as well as anticipate a number of futures within the international space; and the BRICS partnership can be considered an outcome of countries finding their role in such an environment and creating a form of balance within this changing system, and within that dynamic the group needs to find a particular identity. Hence, it is possible to see beyond the BRICS partnership and consider the larger picture, as well as hold realistic prescriptions about what BRICS can and cannot do. Thus the academic contributions to the discussions of global moving targets have been driven by the theme of global governance, which has evolved substantially since the 2000s and is noted in a number of global initiatives like the former United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals. This can be seen as the start of a global movement towards achieving inclusive development and inclusive growth, a precursor to the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda of 2030, which is also supported by BRICS countries. In order to reach this goal globally, countries need to perform a balancing act between their domestic interests, global interests and the self-interests of elites.



This becomes a critical point for the BRICS partnership because of romanticised expectations of the BRICS partnership and the potential that the BRICS will provide alternative, thus linking to the debate that the BRICS powers are reshaping global power dynamics for all developing countries. However, it is very important to ask - If we are reforming, what are we reforming in the international system, and what is it that we want to create? From a critical perspective, BRICS can be part of both worlds whereby it can compete and coexist with the West, and maintain self-interests by leveraging their global positions to increase international profiles and impact factors on international platforms. For example, China has taken immense strides in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to propel the Renminbi in the currency basket, and simultaneously China has used the opportunity to leverage and shape international commodity markets through transfer payments and currency swaps. This is a brief illustration that indicates how the BRICS have leveraged their geostrategic positioning within the global financial architecture. These financial architectures, shaped by the West, are heavily embedded and interdependent; the BRICS have the ability to operate within this system and benefit from it.

It becomes ever important for a country to locate itself within this changing system and endeavour to impact the system accordingly. An example of effective locating is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as a global development initiative and geostrategic leveraging opportunity, which touches on mega infrastructure development, maritime securitization of the relevant zones, and thus facilitates trade, investment and further cooperation. Thus a newer trend in cooperation and garnering an international currency of trustworthiness is to contribute to development and add a socio-economic and security dynamic. Although this initiative is not part of the BRICS partnership, it is possible that in the future it could make its way onto the BRICS agenda. The position of the BRICS in international relations still needs to be defined or define itself as Ms Naidu asked - What will the BRICS be in 2030, 2040 or 2050 and beyond and would they have created access to a new normal that the BRICS are trying to create within an ever-changing environment? Ms. Naidu noted a quote by Antonio Gramsci that characterises the notion of the moving target of the international system in that "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."

This quote depicts the possible difficulties that the BRICS may encounter in their endeavour to achieve a shared vision of global economic governance reform, or a possible new normal. This aspiration integrates into the idea that nobody gets left

behind under agenda 2030, as well as the notion that this level of inclusion needs to be achieved in the context of a development security paradigm. BRICS is not responsible to achieve this level of reform for all, even though it is a vision for an alternative world; therefore, it is likely that people will be left behind, and there will be further challenges from those left behind. As we move forward it is possible to celebrate success stories of countries like China and India, lifting their citizens out of poverty; however, the unprecedented growth has also contributed to potential tensions because of geographical location and competition - Can we ignore the gravity of the global strategic interest that these countries have? To conclude, Ms. Naidu explained that there is potential to achieve inclusive development through the various projects and programmes and those left behind will still endeavour to catch up on the way.

Question and answer session

The first discussion point explored the issues surrounding the protection around pharmaceutical industries, and this comment was particularly geared toward the WTO policy framework into health systems and pharmaceutical industries, and the need to be inclusive of traditional medicines and the needs of this sector. The response from Dr. Thulare explained that this critique is based on the experiences that pharmaceutical companies from the global north are not generally interested in investing in research for 'forgotten diseases' and their anticipated solutions within the global south. This is mostly due to the financial returns, which may not be as significant for pharmaceutical companies. For example, in terms of HIV/Aids, if a new drug emerges internationally and local policy is particularly geared towards making that drug available to the poor, multinational corporations still have the rights to refuse special or preferential treatment.



This does not help the issue of access or cooperation, moreover the 'playing fields' and levels of disparity will remain skewed between the global North and South because the human development factor is ultimately affected by a lack of access. In terms of traditional medicines, which have long histories and have been community owned, the WTO does not recognise community ownership. Instead it suggests that states take responsibility, via local governments, as to who owns the intellectual property rights of medicines. Local governments in such instances do not regulate traditional medicines and in many cases allow bio-prospectors and piracy to take place, moreover there was no global mechanism from the WTO that showed concern to address this issue. This may have a severe impact on the development of communities, the commons and endogenous knowledge systems.

The next topic of discussion explored South Africa's role in BRICS and Africa. The BRICS have started including African stakeholders in various summits and activities since 2013; moreover, BRICS countries' bilateral involvements with African countries have grown. What are the rules of engagement with African states? There is a critique that African countries are not able to advocate for their holistic benefits of the partnership and therefore the rules of engagement need to be followed up in terms of the outreach partnership that took place in 2013. Perhaps the AU should coordinate a common policy or position where South Africa can communicate to the BRICS what the African agenda looks like and what they would like to see as well. The African Regional Centre (ARC) can hold immense potential for such coordination in sharing terms of reference and

information regarding project financing through bilateral partnerships. There is a possibility that it has the potential to streamline the rules of engagement because of its institutional network through the New Development Bank (NDB). South Africa has entered a particularly interesting period, whereby a new president has stepped into the role and observers are still anticipating to see what his approach will be towards BRICS, Africa and the world broadly.



Regarding the excitement about the NDB's potential to invite new members, a representative from the South African BRICS Business Council explained that the private sector is interested in becoming involved with the bank and further asked if there is a structure in place within the NDB for private companies looking to invest in countries that are not necessarily members of the bank. Despite this excitement, it remains unclear when the bank will be open to membership.

The discussion also went into the dynamics of coordinating amongst the different BRICS think tanks and how they may operate under Track II diplomacy. The SABTT was first incubated by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), and thereafter formally housed by the Department of Higher Education and Training within the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS). It was a political choice to make the think tanks open to all universities, think tanks and other research organisations. The feedback received from these stakeholders has contributed, but is not limited, to the research areas set out; for example space research requires the SABTT to play a coordinating role and bring together the relevant research role players to contribute to the topic. However, the BRICS Think Tanks process also differs across the BRICS countries, for example in Russia and China there is closer cooperation with the state. In Brazil there was an evolution whereby their think tank was situated in the Presidency, but now it has moved between the Ministry of External Relations and the Presidency, whilst in India it is basically delegated to an independent organisation called the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Each country has the opportunity to place a number of agenda items forward and then discuss them at the pre-academic forums before the summit.

The next theme of comments and questions focused on where BRICS fits into global dynamics. An audience member commented on the interesting dichotomy that was created in the narratives where western world power is waning and BRICS is rising to create a new world order, and further asked what indicated that the West was prepared to relinquish power and how will BRICS continue to navigate the possible regional tensions. In addition to that, it was noted that the current state of affairs and policy space is dominated by a neoliberal economic agenda and therefore it was asked how it would be possible to influence national policy makers, and what is the role of the state in economic policy? The panel explained that it is important to change existing architectures through the various avenues, for example the NDB and the proposed credit rating agency that is expected to be set up in the years to follow are a clear example of institutional frameworks that reinforce the normative aspirations of the BRICS partners.

In terms of China's positioning and involvement in BRICS, the BRI and other bilateral agreements are part of its development goals, and regional and global priorities and therefore it is not China's aspiration, nor does it work to its current interests, to dominate the identity of BRICS. Rather, China's leadership ambitions on these platforms are more subtle, using a subdued way of pursuing collective responsibility. However, China's presence should not be taken for granted; resources and finances play a significant role and China's momentous growth in political, social and economic capital has contributed to its emboldened profile. There are internal BRICS reactions to China's emboldened actions, whereby India, and to an extent Russia, do not want China to reach those levels of power particularly in their own regions; they therefore also use their own channels to counter balance China.

A critique of the BRICS expressed that it is not very well organised in participating with all actors, for example in the context of labour and particularly in the context of the fourth industrial revolution, where labour suffers most at the hands of technology. Although it was acknowledged that labour should become a focus area of the 2018 Summit, there have been attempts to involve labour groups; however, these groups also needed to organise themselves.



In the topic of security, the audience asked what the future of BRICS and global security is? On the topic of security there has been collaboration; in previous years, terrorism and counter terrorism have featured strongly in BRICS discussions, which have at times been elevated to the UNSC. Two growing trends are that of cyber security and maritime security, both pose different dynamics. For maritime security it will play on the congruence of geography between Russia, China and India, and for India, South Africa and Brazil. Different tensions also emerge in the context of security and competition within regional dynamics, as seen with the border dispute between China and India, which then also become competing issues rather than cooperation points.

In terms of the MDGs, there were a lot of rhetorical commitments, and there is an anticipation that the SDGs will have a similar effect, with BRICS countries playing more prominent roles in their implementation. It was then asked if BRICS has any mechanisms in place to ensure that there are substantive policy manoeuvres in order to achieve the SDGs. The panel explained that it is difficult to find a uniform approach to implementing the various commitments because of the country systems that the BRICS follow. Although there is an agreement by the ministers, it is dependent on the countries. The possible outcomes are vague, but it is important to take this commitment to the SDGs one step at a time.

Another theme considered the human rights dimensions of illicit financial flows and the BRICS. The panellists noted that it is a serious issue to be considered among the BRICS as it is politically explosive for all, however there has been no consensus on how to tackle this matter at the global level.



The last comment considered the BRICS gender forum, which is listed in the BRICS 2018 agenda items, where the audience asked the panellists to expand on how this point will be adding value to the BRICS discussions. The panellists explained that it is an interesting development; and there is great variation between different BRICS countries in terms of how women and women's rights are perceived and approached. South Africa is poised to address this because it has been active in addressing issues of patriarchy and women's emancipation. Gender was placed on the agenda because there was pressure from the various BRICS forums explaining that women's voices were not listened to, heard or represented in the BRICS forum. This was particularly apparent in the civil society forum where violence against women and women's rights were put on the agenda. The BRICS Business Council had also started their own initiatives on gender in terms of access and empowerment; whereas the BRICS Parliament group also noted the importance of gender.

Conclusions and way forward

In closing the event, Prof. Sarah Mosoetsa, CEO of the NIHSS, expressed the SABTT's and NIHSS's excitement to undertake the work ahead for the year in hosting another 40 meetings to be held in the course of 2018, which would contribute to closer cooperation. More importantly, the SABTT is determined to coordinate BRICS, and that it is imperative to ask critical questions with no fear. This dialogue was the launch of the 2018 BRICS policy dialogues, and active engagement was encouraged throughout the year.





IGD and SABTT Dialogue Series

The South African BRICS Presidency 2018: An Inclusive Path towards Global Development

Programme, 16 February 2018

Donald Gordon Auditorium, Wits Business School, 2 St David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg

Facilitator: Dr Philani Mthembu

9:30 – 10:00	Arrival and registration
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and opening remarks by Dr. Philani Mthembu (Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue)
10:10 – 10:50	Keynote Address by Prof. Ari Sitas (Chairperson of the South Africa BRICS Think Tanks Council)
10:50 – 11:05	Inputs by Dr. Aquina Thulare (Technical Specialist on Health Economics for the National Health Insurance (NHI), Department of Health)
11:05 – 11:20	Inputs by Ms. Sanusha Naidu (Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Global Dialogue and Guest Lecturer at University of Cape Town)
11:20 – 12:30	Discussions Q & A Session
12:30 – 12:35	Vote of thanks and close
12:35 –	Lunch and departure

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