

BRICS Cooperation: Advancing the Collective Progress of the Global South

Xinhua Institute

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Foreword

In 2006, the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China convened the first meeting, marking the beginning of BRICS cooperation. In 2009, the leaders of these countries convened their inaugural summit in Russia, gradually establishing a multi-tier framework for practical collaboration across various fields. This framework is anchored by leaders' meetings and supported by ministerial-level engagements, including gatherings of high-level representatives on security and foreign ministers. As the influence of the BRICS cooperation mechanism continues to grow, the "BRICS family" has steadily expanded. In 2011, South Africa officially joined BRICS. In 2024, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia became full members, followed by Indonesia in January 2025, establishing an "Expanded BRICS Cooperation" framework.

As a model of collaboration among emerging markets and developing countries, the BRICS mechanism has, since its inception, adhered to the BRICS spirit of mutual respect and understanding, equality of sovereignty, solidarity and democracy, openness and inclusiveness, deepened cooperation, and consensus-based decision-making. It has transcended geopolitical and ideological differences, forging a path of unity, collaboration and joint development. Evolving from an initial platform for economic dialogue to a comprehensive strategic cooperation mechanism encompassing politics, security, economy, science and technology, and culture, BRICS has not only become a pivotal force in the collective rise of the Global South but also advanced global governance toward greater fairness, equity and inclusivity.

BRICS countries choose their development paths independently, jointly defend their right to development, and march in tandem toward modernization. This has not only fueled their prosperity but also provided strategic guidance for the Global South in achieving shared development. With broader representation and enhanced inclusiveness, the "Expanded BRICS Cooperation" unites emerging forces from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. This new paradigm injects fresh momentum into high-quality BRICS collaboration, laying a stronger foundation for amplifying the voice of the Global South on the international stage.

BRICS achievements stem from its unwavering commitment to fairness and justice, relentless pursuit of innovation-led development, and the profound practice of mutual learning among civilizations. Respecting the historical and cultural traditions of all countries, BRICS supports Global South countries in pursuing paths to modernization suited to their national conditions, challenging monolithic narratives about development models and contributing wisdom to a harmonious diversity of global civilizations. At this critical juncture in history, amid challenges such as anti-globalization headwinds, geopolitical conflicts and climate change, BRICS countries shoulder greater responsibility and mission. They must advance high-quality "Expanded BRICS Cooperation," leverage platforms like "BRICS Plus," and engage more Global South countries

to foster unity and collaboration to transform global governance. As the vanguard of the Global South, BRICS will confront shared challenges with a sense of responsibility, pioneer a brighter future, and steer Global South countries toward modernization, so as to jointly write a new chapter in human history.

Chapter 1:

BRICS Cooperation: Achievements and Contributions of Solidarity and Collaboration

BRICS is an important force in shaping the international landscape. We choose our development paths independently, jointly defend our right to development, and march in tandem toward modernization. This represents the direction of the advancement of human society, and will profoundly impact the development process of the world.

– H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

Since its inception in 2006, the BRICS cooperation mechanism has evolved from foreign ministerial dialogues to regular summits of state leaders, transforming from an economic consultation platform into a comprehensive strategic framework that encompasses politics, diplomacy, economy and cultural exchanges. It has evolved into a vital collaborative platform for the Global South nations. Guided by the BRICS spirit of openness, inclusiveness and mutual benefit, these countries, transcending ideological and geopolitical differences, have joined hands in solidarity and cooperation to safeguard peace and security, pursue green and innovative development, uphold fairness and justice, and promote mutual learning among civilizations. Together, they have become a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

I. Peaceful BRICS: Forging a Common Security Framework

Humans are an indivisible community of security. Only by embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security can we forge a path toward universal security. The "Peaceful BRICS" principle positions these countries as stabilizing forces amid global turbulence. Through coordinated positions and collective actions in platforms such as the UN Security Council, BRICS effectively defends the interests of developing countries, promotes an international agenda that advances peace through dialogue, facilitates the implementation of the Global Security Initiative, and promotes the establishment of a UN-centered, equitable, and effective global security governance system.

-- The political and security dialogue mechanisms have been operating effectively.

BRICS countries have established multi-tier consultation frameworks, including state leaders' summits, foreign ministers' meetings, and high-level security representatives' conferences, through which they mutually support each other on issues concerning their core interests and enhance coordination on major international and regional issues. Since the inaugural Meeting of High Representatives on National Security in 2010, BRICS members have conducted high-level security dialogue at least once a year to discuss counterterrorism, regional conflicts, cybersecurity and other critical topics. Following the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2022, China proposed three key principles: no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities, and no fanning flames, and strive for swift de-escalation of the situation. China and Brazil, in collaboration with other countries from the Global South, initiated a group of Friends for Peace to address the crisis. The aim is to gather more voices advocating peace. When the Palestinian-Israeli conflict intensified in October 2023, BRICS convened an extraordinary virtual summit chaired by South Africa, releasing a joint statement on the Palestine issue that urged an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and endorsed UN relief operations in Gaza.

As of 2024, BRICS foreign ministers have held 15 meetings and released over 30 joint statements addressing pivotal issues, including the Syrian crisis, the situation in Afghanistan, the Ukraine crisis and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Through the political and security dialogue mechanism, BRICS has established an effective platform for coordinating positions, which has not only strengthened mutual trust among member states but also supported Global South countries in securing a stronger voice in the international security agenda.

-- Solid and effective response to non-traditional security threats.

BRICS countries have identified non-traditional security as a key area of collaboration, established dedicated working groups on counterterrorism and cybersecurity and addressed non-traditional security threats through joint exercises, information sharing and technological cooperation. At the 13th BRICS summit in 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to "deepen counterterrorism collaboration and eradicate the root causes of terrorism." China calls on BRICS countries to join hands to combat all forms of terrorism, oppose the politicization and instrumentalization of counterterrorism issues, and reject double standards in the fight against terrorism.

On counterterrorism, the BRICS countries support the finalization and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the framework of the United Nations and take coordinated and unified action against all terrorists and terrorist organizations designated by the United Nations. The BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group and its five sub-groups are encouraged to undertake counterterrorist activities in accordance with the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan. As of June 2025, the BRICS Counter-Terrorism

Working Group had held 10 meetings. The BRICS countries have also organized multiple bilateral and multilateral joint counter-terrorism exercises, covering themes such as simulated cross-border terrorist attacks and crisis response, which have significantly enhanced counter-terrorism cooperation.

In the area of cybersecurity cooperation, since the introduction of the Roadmap of practical BRICS cooperation on IT security in 2017, the BRICS countries have continued to advance related initiatives. They have established the BRICS Cybersecurity Working Group and implemented a regular meeting mechanism. China and Russia have supported the development of a global legal framework for cyberspace governance within the framework of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group from 2021 to 2025, and have clarified within the BRICS mechanism that the United Nations should play a leading role in this effort. Arrangements have also been made to coordinate BRICS cybersecurity cooperation within the UN framework for cyberspace governance. Additionally, China and Russia have recognized an e-handbook on financial information security regulations under the BRICS mechanism, laying a foundation for bilateral cooperation in digital finance and providing an opportunity for other BRICS members to share security standards.

-- Peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance demonstrate commitment and responsibility.

BRICS countries have demonstrated their commitment as a "Peaceful BRICS" through their active participation in humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations under the UN framework and have proved to be key contributors to UN peacekeeping missions. As of 2024, China, India and South Africa had collectively dispatched over 120,000 peacekeepers, participating in missions in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and Mali. BRICS peacekeeping personnel account for more than 12 percent of the total number serving under the UN. China is the largest troop-contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and India also ranks among the leading contributors globally. BRICS countries have also provided substantial humanitarian aid in response to various crises. The New Development Bank, a significant outcome of BRICS cooperation, has become an essential platform for supporting member states and other developing countries in addressing humanitarian emergencies by providing financial assistance. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the New Development Bank established a 10 billion-U.S.-dollar emergency assistance loan mechanism, allocating 5 billion dollars to support the most urgent health and social protection needs of its member states and the remaining 5 billion dollars to aid economic recovery. In 2023, after severe flooding in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, the New Development Bank provided approximately 1.115 billion dollars in support for disaster relief and reconstruction efforts.

II. BRICS Innovation: Technology–Driven Industrial Advancement

Amidst the accelerating global technological revolution and industrial transformation, the "Expanded BRICS Cooperation" has prioritized innovation to enhance economic resilience and industrial competitiveness through deeper collaboration in technology, the digital economy and production capacity. The group has built an efficient innovation ecosystem in 5G, artificial intelligence, digital economy and new energy, driving industrial modernization and high-quality development while contributing to global economic growth.

-- Collaborative scientific and technological innovation builds a hub of excellence.

The BRICS countries have established a multi-tiered scientific and technological cooperation mechanism, creating an innovation-driven collaborative platform that has significantly enhanced the technological R&D and industrial application capabilities of member states. Since its establishment as a standing mechanism in 2014, the BRICS Ministers of Science, Technology, and Innovation Meeting has been held 12 times by 2024, providing a regular platform for consultations on sci-tech innovation issues under the BRICS framework. During the 12th BRICS Summit in 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that China would establish a BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution Innovation Center in Xiamen to promote cooperation in policy coordination, talent development, and project implementation, with the active participation of BRICS countries. Since its inception, the innovation center has focused on three key tasks: policy coordination, talent cultivation and project development, dedicating its efforts to advancing BRICS cooperation in these areas. As of 2024, the center had issued five batches of 177 priority tasks, including pioneering work on industrial standards, while training professionals from BRICS and Global South countries through various offline training programs, with participants from over 70 nations. Among them, the courses designed around the eight key areas of the Global Development Initiative have been exceptionally well received by participants.

Data shows that BRICS countries are steadily strengthening their position in the global innovation system. In 2024, China and India ranked first and sixth, respectively, among the world's leading patent-filing countries. Within the BRICS framework, member states leverage their distinctive strengths to advance technological collaboration. Under the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation Cooperation Agreement, the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS-04), jointly developed by China and Brazil, along with remote sensing satellites from Russia and other members, forms a high-efficiency satellite constellation. All member states have access to their data. Notably, China's Huawei partnered with South African telecom companies to deploy 5G net-

works, significantly supporting South Africa's smart city initiatives while boosting e-commerce penetration and local economic growth. Additionally, BRICS countries conduct annual joint funding programs for scientific research, prioritizing their respective competitive areas of focus. Collaborative projects span from applied fields, including environmental governance, biofuels, to exploratory fundamental research, including astronomy, physics and earth sciences.

-- Digital economy collaboration bridging divides.

The digital economy is a key area of cooperation under the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025. The Kazan Declaration, adopted at the 16th BRICS Summit, reaffirmed member states' recognition of the importance of building a convenient, inclusive and secure digital economy. It emphasized enhanced BRICS collaboration in this domain, with the goals of improving people's livelihoods and bridging the digital divide, particularly between developed and developing countries.

In practice, the BRICS Digital Ecosystem Cooperation Network has expanded to over 30 members, spanning BRICS countries and partner countries, including China, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Nigeria. The multilateral Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) bridge project, involving China, the UAE, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia, has entered its minimum viable product stage, offering new solutions for cross-border settlements among BRICS countries. Meanwhile, the China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center, initiated by China, strengthens industrial alignment and project collaboration within BRICS. E-commerce enterprises in Brazil, South Africa and other member states have experienced rapid growth in recent years by leveraging the expertise and resources of Chinese companies. These cooperative efforts have not only elevated the digital economy capabilities of participating countries but also amplified BRICS' collective voice in the global digital economy.

-- Capacity cooperation and technology transfer accelerate industrialization.

Through capacity cooperation and technology transfer, BRICS countries have accelerated the industrialization process and optimized industrial structures among member states. In nurturing new quality productive forces, the China-BRICS Science and Innovation Incubation Park for the New Era has been launched, with institutions such as the BRICS Deep-Sea Resources International Research Center, the China Center for Cooperation on Development of Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries, and the BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies providing support for BRICS capacity cooperation. Collaborative construction of industrial parks and production bases among BRICS countries has yielded significant results. For example, the Hisense South Africa Industrial Park, co-funded in 2013 by Hisense Group and the China-Africa Development Fund, has created over 6,000 local jobs, with approximately 70 percent of managerial positions held by local employees. Its annual output of roughly 1 million

televisions and 500,000 refrigerators not only meets local demand in South Africa but is also exported to over 20 African and European countries, effectively driving the development of local supporting industries. Leveraging the New Development Bank platform, BRICS has further expanded the impact of technology transfer to more countries. In 2023, the New Development Bank signed an agreement to provide 3.2 billion rand (about 180 million U.S. dollars) in loans for Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which, upon completion, will promote the development of Lesotho's hydropower industry and provide employment opportunities in its northern mountain regions. Through scientific and technological collaboration, digital economy and capacity cooperation, "Innovative BRICS" has significantly enhanced the innovation capabilities and industrial competitiveness of BRICS countries, providing technological and industrial support for the continued deepening of Global South cooperation.

III. Green BRICS: Exploring Pathways to Sustainable Development

Amid intensifying global climate change and increasing resource constraints, BRICS countries are deepening collaboration in renewable energy, green technology, and green finance. These efforts aim to enhance environmental resilience and sustainable development capabilities. Cooperation in wind, solar, biofuels, and green finance is helping to build an efficient green economic ecosystem, driving high-quality growth across member states.

-- Promoting a just energy transition through renewable energy cooperation.

BRICS countries rely on fossil fuels to varying degrees. The Kazan Declaration reaffirms that a just energy transition must take into account each country's conditions, including climate and natural resources, national economic structures and energy mixes, and the level of economic dependence on fossil fuels, while opposing unilateral, punitive, or discriminatory protectionist measures taken under the pretext of environmental concerns, as such measures violate international law. A stable and reliable supply of new energy technologies, along with the development of industrial capacity, is necessary during the decarbonization process, and associated economic, social, and technological risks must be prevented in the process.

In this regard, China, leveraging its extensive experience in the new energy sector, actively supports the global development of the renewable energy industry. In South Africa, Chinese enterprises have built the Longyuan De Aar Wind Power Project, integrating investment, construction, and operation, with a total installed capacity of 244,500 kW. The project supplies around 760 million kWh of stable electricity annually, equivalent to saving 215,800 tonnes of standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 620,000 tonnes per year, thereby meeting the electricity needs of 300,

000 households. In Brazil, CGN's TN Wind Power Project generates 720 million kWh of electricity each year, enough to supply 430,000 households and reduce CO₂ emissions by 650,000 tonnes annually. In Egypt, the Benban Solar Park in Aswan spans 37 square kilometers, with plans for 40 solar power stations that will total 2 GW of installed capacity, resulting in an expected annual reduction of 2 million tons of CO₂ emissions. These projects have directly boosted the local green industry. Over 95% of the construction workforce for the Benban project are residents, who gain valuable experience through their participation. Even before the project was fully completed, companies from the UAE and Saudi Arabia have already started recruiting talent locally. In the area of energy conservation and environmental protection, China's new energy vehicles provide an essential option for green transformation in the transportation sectors of BRICS nations, with the number of such vehicles rapidly growing in Russia, Brazil, and other countries. Chinese automotive companies are also actively investing in local manufacturing, driving the development of related local industries.

-- Green financing mechanisms support sustainable development goals.

BRICS countries are providing critical financial support for their sustainable development through green financing mechanisms. The New Development Bank (NDB), as the core platform for BRICS green cooperation, prioritizes renewable energy and low-carbon infrastructure projects. Under its second five-year strategy (2022-2026), the bank has committed \$30 billion in funding for member states, 40% of which is allocated to investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation. In 2023, the NDB issued its first USD-denominated green bond, raising \$1.25 billion exclusively for financing or re-financing eligible green projects. Notably, when countries such as Indonesia and Colombia expressed interest in joining the NDB, access to green funding for sustainable development was a key consideration.

IV. Just BRICS: Driving Global Governance Reform

Emerging from the historic rise of the Global South, the BRICS cooperation mechanism serves as a strategic force for building a more equitable global governance system. The current system's deficiencies—chronic reform delays, inadequate representation of Global South voices, and its failure to curb unilateralism, protectionism, and bullying by certain nations—have become increasingly apparent. Guided by fairness and justice, BRICS enhances its collective influence in global governance through coordinated practices in international politics, economics, and rule-making. This not only strengthens the representation and voice of developing countries but also charts a course for systemic reform.

-- Multilateral coordination and joint consultation on global issues.

Through multi-level multilateral mechanisms, BRICS countries have established a co-operation model centered on the coordination of positions, significantly enhancing the collective influence of member states in global governance. In advancing the reform of the global governance system, BRICS countries uphold genuine multilateralism, demonstrating a firm stance against unilateralism and bullying practices. In trade and economics, the 2024 Kazan Declaration reaffirmed BRICS' support for an open, transparent, fair, predictable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core and based on rules and consensus, ensuring special and differential treatment for developing nations, including the least-developed countries. The BRICS collectively opposes unilateral trade restrictions that violate WTO rules and advocates for reforms that safeguard the multilateral framework, reject protectionist barriers, and prioritize equitable trade rules vital to the development of the Global South. China, Brazil, India, and other countries have actively proposed WTO measures to protect the interests of developing countries. Through regional trade coordination, the BRICS has reduced trade barriers among its members, strengthened economic connectivity, and enhanced collective competitiveness in global trade. In security, BRICS emphasizes dialogue-based solutions to conflicts, firmly opposing unilateral sanctions and military interference. At various occasions, addressing international conflicts and crises, such as the 2023 BRICS Extraordinary Summit on the Palestine-Israel issue, BRICS countries have generally called for ceasefires and political solutions, advocated for respect for national sovereignty and international law, and promoted a greater role for multilateral platforms, including the UN. This approach underscores the legitimacy and effectiveness of genuine multilateralism, amplifies the representation of the Global South in security governance, and reinforces the BRICS' commitment to equity and justice.

-- The "BRICS solution" achieves remarkable success in finance.

In the realm of finance, the New Development Bank (NDB) stands as a landmark achievement of BRICS cooperation, offering an exemplary "BRICS solution" to global financial governance. As the first multilateral development institution established and led by emerging markets and developing countries, the NDB represents a groundbreaking initiative for solidarity among the Global South. By April 2025, the NDB had approved 120 projects with a total investment of \$40 billion, thereby optimizing financing channels for member states. It provides high-quality, low-cost, and sustainable infrastructure financing, effectively supporting the modernization of countries from the Global South.

The New Development Bank (NDB) distinguishes itself from other international multilateral banks through several key features. Unlike some institutions, it neither requires nor imposes conditions during loan negotiations, instead aligning with national agendas and needs while ensuring equal participation from all member states. The NDB also offers innovative financing solutions, including local currency lending, to mit-

igate exchange rate risks and enhance project financial stability, which protects borrowing nations from volatile international market interest rates and currency fluctuations. This institutional innovation helps eliminate politically motivated conditions and the so-called "debt traps" that many countries have faced in traditional international financial markets, thereby safeguarding the legitimate interests of the Global South and supporting its modernization efforts. The NDB's successful practices not only advance a multilateral and multipolar international financial architecture but also demonstrate how governance reforms can drive development. They reflect BRICS' foundational principle of promoting governance through cooperation and achieving development through governance.

V. People-to-People BRICS: Cultural Exchange and Mutual Understanding

BRICS countries leverage people-to-people exchanges as a vital bridge, fostering cooperation across education, academia, culture, and media. Through the vibrant interplay of their unique civilizations, BRICS countries contribute cultural wisdom to shaping a more inclusive and diverse international order, infusing the global governance system with renewed cultural vitality.

-- Education and academic cooperation strengthen knowledge sharing.

BRICS has established multi-level mechanisms for education and academic cooperation, forming a collaborative platform centered on knowledge sharing and significantly boosting scholarly exchanges and talent development. Founded in 2015, the BRICS University Alliance comprises over 60 leading universities from member countries, facilitating student exchanges, joint research projects, and mutual recognition of academic courses. As of 2024, the alliance promoted over 80 cross-border academic projects spanning cultural studies, technological innovation, and sustainable development. Established in 2022, the BRICS Vocational Education Alliance comprises 68 founding members, including industry organizations, vocational colleges, research institutions, and enterprises, dedicated to deepening industry-education integration, enhancing the adaptability of vocational education, and cultivating highly skilled talent to meet the modernization needs of BRICS nations. The BRICS Think Tank Council continues to promote research and capacity-building across the academic communities of member nations. A series of scholarly activities, including the BRICS Expert Forum, the BRICS Think Tank Forum, and the BRICS Seminar on Governance, has deepened mutual understanding and knowledge sharing among BRICS scholars, while providing solid intellectual support for BRICS cooperation.

-- Flourishing and diverse cultural exchanges.

Over the past decade, BRICS countries have actively promoted the sharing of their rich histories, traditions, and distinctive arts through a wide range of cultural activities and cooperative mechanisms. From the BRICS Cultural Festival, Film Festival, and music concerts to various alliances with museums, libraries, folk dance troupes, and film academies, BRICS has established extensive frameworks and signature brands in nearly every field of culture. In 2024, the inaugural BRICS Tourism Forum was held in Moscow, resulting in the adoption of the BRICS Tourism Cooperation Roadmap. This encouraged increased mutual visits, skill enhancement, sustainable tourism, and the digitalization of tourism services among BRICS countries. In the same year, the BRICS Games, held in Russia, attracted over 3,000 athletes from nearly 100 countries and regions. On the media front, the BRICS Media High-End Forum, initiated in 2015 by Xinhua News Agency in collaboration with major media from Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa, has convened six times as of 2024. Through robust media dialogue and cooperation, BRICS has significantly enhanced its influence and voice in global information governance, becoming a prominent international platform for "Global South" perspectives.

Recognizing the multifaceted value of cultural exchange, the 2024 Kazan Declaration not only "reaffirms the importance of people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries for promoting mutual understanding, friendship, and cooperation," but also highlights culture's vital role in sustainable development: "as it greatly enhances economic growth, social cohesion, and overall well-being." Education, academic, cultural, and media cooperation have thus deepened humanistic exchanges across BRICS countries, fostered closer connections among peoples, and further developed collaborative networks in the humanities. These efforts continue to lay a solid foundation of public support for a deepened BRICS partnership.

Chapter 2:

"Expanded BRICS Cooperation": New Opportunities for High-Quality Development

The more tumultuous our times become, the more we must stand firm at the forefront, exhibiting tenacity, demonstrating the audacity to pioneer and displaying the wisdom to adapt. We must work together to build BRICS into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations and a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

– H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

In August 2023, the 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, at which BRICS state leaders decided to expand membership. In January 2024, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia officially became members of BRICS. In January 2025, Indonesia also became an official member. Following this expansion, BRICS countries now account for over 50% of the world's population, around 30% of global GDP by market exchange rates, over 50% of global economic growth and more than 25% of global energy exports. With greater scale and influence, the expanded BRICS brings fresh opportunities for high-quality development within the framework of the "Expanded BRICS Cooperation."

I. Expansion and Growth: Unlocking New Drivers for Cooperation

The new momentum for cooperation within BRICS stems from the shared needs and complementary strengths among member countries in terms of geography, economy and international agenda. This round of expansion has broken away from the exclusivity of traditional alliances, instead embracing emerging economies and regional hub countries to build a more inclusive cooperation platform for the Global South, injecting renewed vitality into long-term collaboration.

-- New drivers of geopolitical representation.

The addition of new member states has significantly broadened the geographical scope of BRICS cooperation, now encompassing all key regions of the Global South. Indonesia, as the largest economy in Southeast Asia and a core member of ASEAN, presents strategic opportunities for deeper engagement with the region. Egypt, serving

as a bridge between Africa and the Middle East, strengthens BRICS' ability to coordinate regional affairs. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran hold vital strategic positions in Middle Eastern geopolitics and energy sectors. This geographic diversity enables BRICS to better represent the interests of the Global South as a whole.

-- New momentum from economic complementarity.

The Expanded BRICS Cooperation membership has significantly enhanced economic complementarity among member states, injecting fresh dynamism into resource integration and coordinated development. Indonesia's abundant natural resources, Saudi Arabia's vast oil and gas reserves, and the UAE's advanced financial services complement the manufacturing powerhouses of China and India, creating a diversified cooperation ecosystem spanning energy, industry, and finance. This structural synergy positions BRICS to play a leading role in global supply chain restructuring, helping member states strengthen economic resilience and foster endogenous drivers for high-quality growth.

-- New momentum for transforming global governance.

The Expanded BRICS Cooperation possesses greater agenda-setting power in global governance reform, unlocking momentum for reshaping the international order. Within the G20, WTO, IMF, and World Bank, the coordinated positions of BRICS can break Western-dominated governance barriers. In the economic and trade sphere, if calculated using purchasing power parity, the GDP of the expanded BRICS countries now accounts for more than one-third of the global total. Their domestic market size, production capacity, and supply chains, as well as resources such as oil and gas reserves, all exert considerable influence worldwide. More importantly, the addition of new member states has made the reform proposals of BRICS more representative and persuasive, providing strategic impetus for the Global South to strive for greater institutional power.

II. Digital Transformation: A New Engine for the Smart Economy

Amid the global wave of digitalization, BRICS is entering a strategic era of intelligent economic collaboration. Following expansion, the group is uniquely positioned to integrate its technological, resource, and market strengths, unlocking new frontiers in digital cooperation.

-- Technology empowerment and collaborative innovation.

Through the integrated application of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud computing and big data, digital transformation is reshaping the collaborative models of the global value chain and breaking the traditional dependence of economic development on resource endowments. Upholding the principle

of equality and mutual benefit, BRICS countries are expected to build a cooperation ecosystem centered on the intelligent economy through internal technology exchanges and market integration, thereby injecting sustained momentum into the future of high-quality development.

The addition of new member countries has brought a wealth of technological resources to the BRICS group. The technological advantages of member states such as China in areas like artificial intelligence, 5G and blockchain, together with the growth potential and demand of new members in digital infrastructure and mobile internet, are mutually complementary. Through joint research and development, the formulation of technical standards and the sharing of experience, BRICS can break through the digital technology barriers traditionally dominated by the West, build an independent and controllable digital technology ecosystem, and inject lasting vitality into smart economic cooperation.

The digital economy is not only a manifestation of technological advancement but also a comprehensive platform for industrial upgrading, social governance, and the improvement of people's livelihoods. The opportunity for digital transformation among BRICS countries lies fundamentally in proactively addressing the development aspirations of the Global South. This opens up a potential leapfrogging path that could surpass the traditional course of industrialization, creating vast prospects for the collective rise of the Global South in the digital era.

-- Market expansion and cooperation in governance.

Following their expansion, BRICS countries now possess over half of the world's population and a rapidly growing digital consumer market, offering numerous possibilities for smart economic cooperation. The vast market space brought by new member countries, combined with the technological and industrial advantages of the existing members, is expected to form a collaborative network covering cross-border e-commerce, digital finance, smart cities, and more. By deepening digital trade and market interconnectivity, member countries can significantly optimize resource allocation, enhance internal economic circulation efficiency, build a more closely integrated digital economy network, and mitigate the potential risks arising from external technology blockades and market volatility. This opens up new avenues for economic transformation, upgrading and boosting global competitiveness.

The future of digital transformation relies on a fair and open global digital governance system. With its expanded membership, BRICS offers ample room for cooperation in digital governance. On issues such as data security, cross-border data flows, and digital sovereignty, BRICS countries can be expected to forge more united positions and a stronger collective voice, jointly advancing the improvement of international digital rules. With enhanced agenda-setting capabilities, BRICS can advocate for digital governance frameworks that benefit developing countries, providing strategic opportunities for the Global South to gain a greater voice in the digital era.

III. Energy Cooperation: Building New Advantages in Diversified Supply

With an expanded membership, BRICS now encompasses both major oil and gas suppliers and key energy consumers, with some members urgently needing to develop renewable energy. Meanwhile, others require a measured approach to decarbonization. Energy is not merely a functional issue but also a matter of political, economic and social stability for many nations. Against the backdrop of rapid reshaping in the global energy landscape, the "Expanded BRICS Cooperation" must integrate its members' resources, technological strengths, and supply-demand synergies to carve out a new direction for diversified energy collaboration, one that optimizes resource allocation while addressing social stability, economic resilience, industrial upgrading and energy security.

-- Fully explore the potential for cooperation by leveraging complementary resources and technologies.

The inclusion of new members brings abundant energy resources and unlocks vast opportunities for synergy. Countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE possess inherent advantages in oil and gas, alongside significant potential in solar energy, complementing the expertise of China and other member states in renewable technologies. In fields such as traditional energy processing, new energy sources like photovoltaics and wind power, and energy storage technologies, China can further deepen cooperation with countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This would not only optimize the production, processing, and transportation of oil and gas resources but also gradually strengthen the industrial foundations for photovoltaics, wind power and other emerging energy sectors in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In doing so, it would steadily promote energy diversification in these countries and help mitigate the fiscal and economic impacts they encounter during the energy transition.

-- Capitalizing on supply and demand integration.

Exploring an internal energy trade and investment cooperation mechanism within the "Expanded BRICS" would optimize supply-consumption matching, ensuring stable market expectations for both producers and consumers. A more resilient and efficient energy supply chain would reduce exposure to external volatility, bolstering members' economic stability and energy security. By extending and refining this supply chain, BRICS countries can create new pathways for economic transformation and sustainable development.

Under the "Expanded BRICS Cooperation" framework, energy collaboration will enhance the BRICS cooperation mechanism's global leadership, providing a replicable model for energy collaboration in the Global South. With its collective weight in hydrocarbon production and consumption, BRICS countries should also strengthen the devel-

opment of international regulations, jointly establish research and development platforms and set technical standards. Furthermore, they should actively make their voices heard in global energy governance and put forward forward-looking proposals on issues such as energy security, new energy financing, and the balance of energy supply and demand. By doing so, they can help steer international energy governance rules toward greater fairness and equity.

IV. Regional Connectivity: Expanding New Networks for Interconnection

Connectivity serves as a cornerstone for advancing economic globalization and regional integration, yet it continues to face multiple bottlenecks. Uneven infrastructure development, geopolitical fragmentation, and exclusive financing mechanisms constrain the ability of developing countries to integrate into global value chains. Many Global South countries struggle with inadequate logistics infrastructure and high transportation costs, challenges that not only hinder their economic development but also exacerbate inequalities in the global connectivity system.

With its expanded membership spanning Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, BRICS now possesses a unique advantage in consolidating infrastructure resources, coordinating regional policies and linking global markets. Leveraging this strength, BRICS can pioneer new pathways for infrastructure and logistics cooperation, expanding the Global South's strategic space for economic integration. In reshaping global connectivity, BRICS can unlock transformative value.

-- Fully leveraging its position as a geographic nexus.

BRICS has seen its hub role significantly enhanced with the addition of new members, providing strategic anchors for regional connectivity. Several members are situated at critical junctures of global trade and logistics: Egypt bridges Africa, Asia, and Europe as a central transport corridor, while Indonesia's surrounding seas are essential routes for Eurasian shipping lanes. By leveraging these geographical advantages, BRICS can optimize the layout of global logistics networks, enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade and transportation, and, utilizing regional connectivity as a link, establish a comprehensive economic network encompassing production, distribution and consumption. This will strengthen both domestic economic circulation and external connectivity among member states. To this end, it is also necessary to enhance transnational policy coordination and further lower the institutional costs of cross-border connectivity.

-- Deepening infrastructure and logistics collaboration.

Focused attention should be given to the connectivity of ports, railways, aviation and digital infrastructure. Through joint investment and technology sharing, infrastructure supply can be optimized, bottlenecks faced by some countries in basic construction can

be addressed, and a solid hardware foundation for regional connectivity can be established. In terms of logistics, efforts should center on trade facilitation and improving logistics efficiency. This includes aligning cross-border trade regulations and logistics standards, simplifying customs procedures, and optimizing transportation networks to enhance efficiency and reduce trade costs.

-- Strengthening financial support for innovation.

BRICS countries should leverage platforms such as the New Development Bank to explore diversified infrastructure financing models. First, they should optimize multilateral financing mechanisms by expanding the scale of funding for infrastructure projects, improving lending terms, and reducing financing costs. Second, they should broaden sources of capital by pursuing various financing models, such as green bonds and infrastructure funds. Third, it is vital to strengthen risk management by establishing sound risk-sharing mechanisms tailored to the long-term and high-risk nature of infrastructure projects, with particular emphasis on effectively mitigating the impacts of geopolitical risks. Lastly, BRICS should advocate for an inclusive governance framework, promoting the formulation of fair and open rules during the financing process and opposing exclusive financing arrangements.

Chapter 3:

"BRICS+" Unites the Mighty Strength of the Global South

The collective rise of the Global South is a distinctive feature of the great transformation across the world. Global South countries marching together toward modernization is monumental in world history and unprecedented in human civilization. At the same time, peace and development still faces severe challenges, and the road to prosperity for the Global South will not be straight. Standing at the forefront of the Global South, we should use our collective wisdom and strength, and stand up to our responsibility for building a community with a shared future for mankind.

– H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

In 2017, during the Ninth BRICS Leaders' Summit held in Xiamen, Xi Jinping proposed the concept of "BRICS+" cooperation. It was during this meeting that the first "BRICS+" Dialogue took place, with the attendance of BRICS leaders and invited leaders from Egypt, Guinea, Mexico, Tajikistan and Thailand. Since then, the "BRICS+" model has continued to deepen and expand, becoming a paradigm for emerging markets and developing countries to engage in South-South cooperation and achieve collective seek strength through unity.

BRICS cooperation serves as a primary channel for promoting unity and collaboration within the Global South. The development of the "BRICS+" model has further expanded the reach of the BRICS mechanism, attracting more developing countries to participate and harnessing the collective strength of the Global South. It has become a symbol of the collective rise of the Global South in this era.

I. Multilateral Cooperation for Equity and Justice

The "BRICS+" model represents a significant innovation in BRICS multilateral cooperation. President Xi Jinping proposed supporting more Global South countries in joining the BRICS as full members, as partner countries, or through the "BRICS+" format, thereby providing an open mechanism with ample room for Global South participation in global governance. Unlike the exclusive alliances of some country groupings, the "BRICS+" model is based on principles of equality and mutual benefit. It encour-

ages Global South countries to voice their concerns on the international stage and strengthen their say in global security and economic governance. This approach enables BRICS to empower developing countries through multilateral coordination actively, advancing the evolution of the international order toward greater fairness and justice.

The openness and inclusiveness of the "BRICS+" mechanism make it a strategic bridge for the Global South in multilateral cooperation. Countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Nigeria and Vietnam have become BRICS partners, consolidating the diverse demands of the developing world and building a cooperation network spanning major global regions. After its expansion, BRICS and its partner nations jointly constitute the driving force at the forefront of the Global South.

Fairness and justice in global governance are rooted in balanced power structures, inclusive rule-making and the safeguarding of peaceful conditions. Yet, today's global governance system faces profound deficits, with frequent geopolitical conflicts and hotspot issues, while the Global South lacks a sufficient voice in security and economic governance, leaving its aspirations for peace and development inadequately addressed. Against this backdrop, by uniting BRICS members and partner countries, responds to the intrinsic demands of a multipolar world order. It not only promotes the rebalancing of international power structures but also provides the Global South with a strategic platform for institutional empowerment.

By attracting more partner countries, "BRICS+" enhances regional security coordination capabilities, particularly through collaboration with organizations such as ASEAN, the African Union, and the Arab League, to establish cross-regional frameworks for peace cooperation. This integrates the security resources and policy wisdom of the Global South, facilitates political solutions to regional conflicts, and fosters stable environments for development to better address nations' security needs.

Through the "BRICS+" mechanism, a stronger collective of Global South countries can amplify their sound volume in frameworks like the UN, G20 and WTO, breaking down Western-dominated rule barriers and further magnifying the "BRICS voice," thus laying a stronger foundation for greater representation of developing countries in international institutional reforms and advancing a more equitable global governance environment for the Global South.

II. Development– Centered Approach for Shared Prosperity

The current global economic governance system suffers from profound deficits: rising trade protectionism, a sluggish global economic recovery and the marginalization of development agendas in key international forums. Within the existing international economic order, historically entrenched divisions of labor, imbalanced factor pricing, market supply-demand distortions and capital control mechanisms have left many countries

in the Global South with constrained developmental rights, which are compounded by a lack of capital accumulation required for modernization. These challenges undermine their economic growth.

The Global South rises through development and thrives as a result. The "BRICS+" mechanism addresses the urgent need of Global South countries for development prioritization, placing development at the center of global economic governance. Through open cooperation, it promotes the rebalancing of global economic power structures and provides institutional empowerment for developing countries. In the realm of development, the "BRICS+" mechanism serves as a bridge connecting BRICS members with a broader range of countries from the Global South. Through the evolution of the mechanism, BRICS countries have progressively established a development-oriented framework for cooperation. This orientation, transmitted via "BRICS+," injects strategic momentum into more countries' pursuit of modernization. The expanded BRICS cooperation, comprising membership and partner countries, further integrates economic resources and market potential through this mechanism, laying a solid foundation for the Global South to address deficits in global economic governance and achieve shared prosperity.

-- Industrial empowerment and infrastructure support.

With its broader regional reach, "BRICS+" can consolidate the industrial strengths of BRICS and its partner countries to drive industrial upgrading in the Global South. Through technology transfer, joint R&D, and industrial alignment, it supports developing nations in transitioning from traditional manufacturing to higher-value-added industries, enhancing their economic competitiveness and sustainable development capacity. In terms of infrastructure, countries in the Global South often face financing and technological bottlenecks. "BRIS+" can leverage pooled resources from BRICS and its partners, backed by mechanisms like the New Development Bank, to optimize financing models and expand support for ports, railways, energy projects, and other critical infrastructure in developing countries beyond BRICS. This provides the hardware needed for the Global South's economic takeoff while easing capital constraints.

-- Advancing a fairer trade and investment environment.

The expanded BRICS grouping and its partner countries possess vast market potential, unique resource advantages and abundant production capacity. This not only creates broad opportunities for trade and investment cooperation but also opens up possibilities for jointly striving toward a fairer global trade and investment environment. Most importantly, while promoting industrial development and infrastructure construction, efforts should also focus on addressing issues such as international economic division of labor, factor pricing and capital control. The goal is to achieve greater economic independence and autonomy through normal international economic and trade cooperation, and to seek a fairer position in the global economic order. In this process, it is nec-

essary not only to remain steadfast in the chosen path but also to strike a balance in terms of timing, intensity and effectiveness. This will undoubtedly be a protracted and challenging process, but it is the only way to resolve the deeply rooted development issues faced by countries in the Global South. If this issue is not addressed, the reform of the global economic governance system will largely fail to benefit the Global South.

III. Shared Civilizational Prosperity for Pluralistic Harmony

Civilizational diversity is an inborn feature of the world. Countries of the Global South should serve as promoters of mutual learning among civilizations, enhance communication and dialogue, and support each other in pursuing paths to modernization that suit their specific national conditions. As an open platform for broader cooperation among Global South nations, the "BRICS+" mechanism, with the inclusion of partner countries from different regions, now has the opportunity to build a global network of civilizational exchange. From Eastern wisdom to African dynamism, from Latin American passion to Middle Eastern heritage, the cultural legacies of the Global South all provide rich cultural soil for the advancement of "BRICS+".

The realization of pluralistic harmony relies on equal dialogue, mutual respect and learning among different civilizations. However, due to historical reasons, the current situation of world civilizations is that they still face challenges such as unidirectional cultural hegemony and the "Clash of Civilizations" theory. The Western-dominated cultural narrative continues to suppress the cultural expression of Global South countries and further limits the diversity of their paths to modernization.

In contrast, the civilizational foundation of the "BRICS+" mechanism is rooted in the diverse integration of cultural traditions, values and modernization practices among the BRICS countries and their partners. The "BRICS+" mechanism can answer the Global South's call to preserve civilizational diversity by emphasizing the importance of dialogue among civilizations based on mutual respect and equality. It can promote the decentralization of global civilizational norms through open cultural cooperation, giving developing countries the cultural confidence to explore paths to modernization suited to their realities. The mechanism can also offer new theoretical frameworks for global civilizational dialogue by upholding the principle that "all civilizations can appreciate each other's beauty while valuing their own and achieve common development." Furthermore, it can explore models of civilizational exchange based on equal dialogue, uniting the rich and varied cultural resources of the Global South and, through inclusive cultural ties, helping to reshape the paradigm for global civilizational dialogue.

Looking forward, in the field of civilizational exchange and mutual learning, BRICS countries and their partners should jointly strengthen the construction of platforms for people-to-people exchanges to enhance mutual trust and cultural identification among the peoples of the Global South, thereby providing a solid social foundation for plural-

istic harmony. They should promote the mutual learning of governance experience, support each country in exploring modernization paths that align with their own culture and national realities, and enhance governance capacity and cultural confidence. Joint efforts to protect and preserve cultural heritage can improve the international influence of Global South civilizations and infuse lasting vitality into global civilizational diversity. Together, they should actively implement the Global Civilization Initiative, advocate inclusive concepts of civilization on platforms such as the United Nations, and enhance the voice and influence of developing countries in global civilizational dialogue and exchanges. Through deepening cooperation on youth and education, they can cultivate a new generation in the Global South with both local traditions and a multicultural perspective, laying a long-term foundation for civilizational harmony and providing enduring cultural support for the modernization of the Global South.

Conclusion

BRICS cooperation serves as a strategic engine driving the joint advancement of the Global South countries, providing an essential practical path for their shared prosperity. The path of BRICS cooperation is not only an extension of concrete mechanisms and projects, but also historical evidence of the collective rise of the Global South.

With its recent enlargement, the BRICS mechanism has entered the era of greater BRICS cooperation. This new phase is characterized by broader regional representation and greater cultural diversity, and is expected to reshape the historical position of Global South countries, offering them a path of transformation from the periphery to the center of global affairs. On this basis, "BRICS+" cooperation further amplifies the leadership role of the BRICS among nations in the Global South. It not only embodies the principle of equality in South-South cooperation but also injects new momentum into building a more just and equitable global order.

As we look ahead, BRICS cooperation will undoubtedly promote transformative changes in global governance, foster mutual learning among civilizations, and comprehensively empower countries in the Global South on their path to modernization. We look forward to the BRICS countries maintaining an open and inclusive stance, uniting the strength of the Global South, and jointly writing a new chapter in building a community with a shared future for humanity.

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The research team comprised the following members: Liu Gang, Xue Ying, Liu Hua, Fan Yu, Jiang Jiang, Long Shengdong, Li Feihu, Li Tao, Tan Linmao, Yang Delong and Zhao Yixuan.

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