

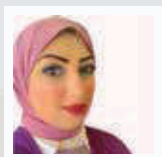


AFRICAN NARRATIVES

BRICS Expansion in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges Amid Global Shifts



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Published by:
African Narratives



Main Points

- Since South Africa joined BRICS in 2010, the group has increasingly focused on Africa, particularly regarding economics and trade.
- With the inclusion of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, Africa now plays a more central role within BRICS, creating new opportunities in trade, investment, and infrastructure development.
- BRICS is helping Africa address key challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity, by facilitating access to new markets and promoting cooperation in innovation and green energy.
- BRICS provides a platform for African countries to strengthen their economic and political standing internationally, supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals on the continent.



Abstract

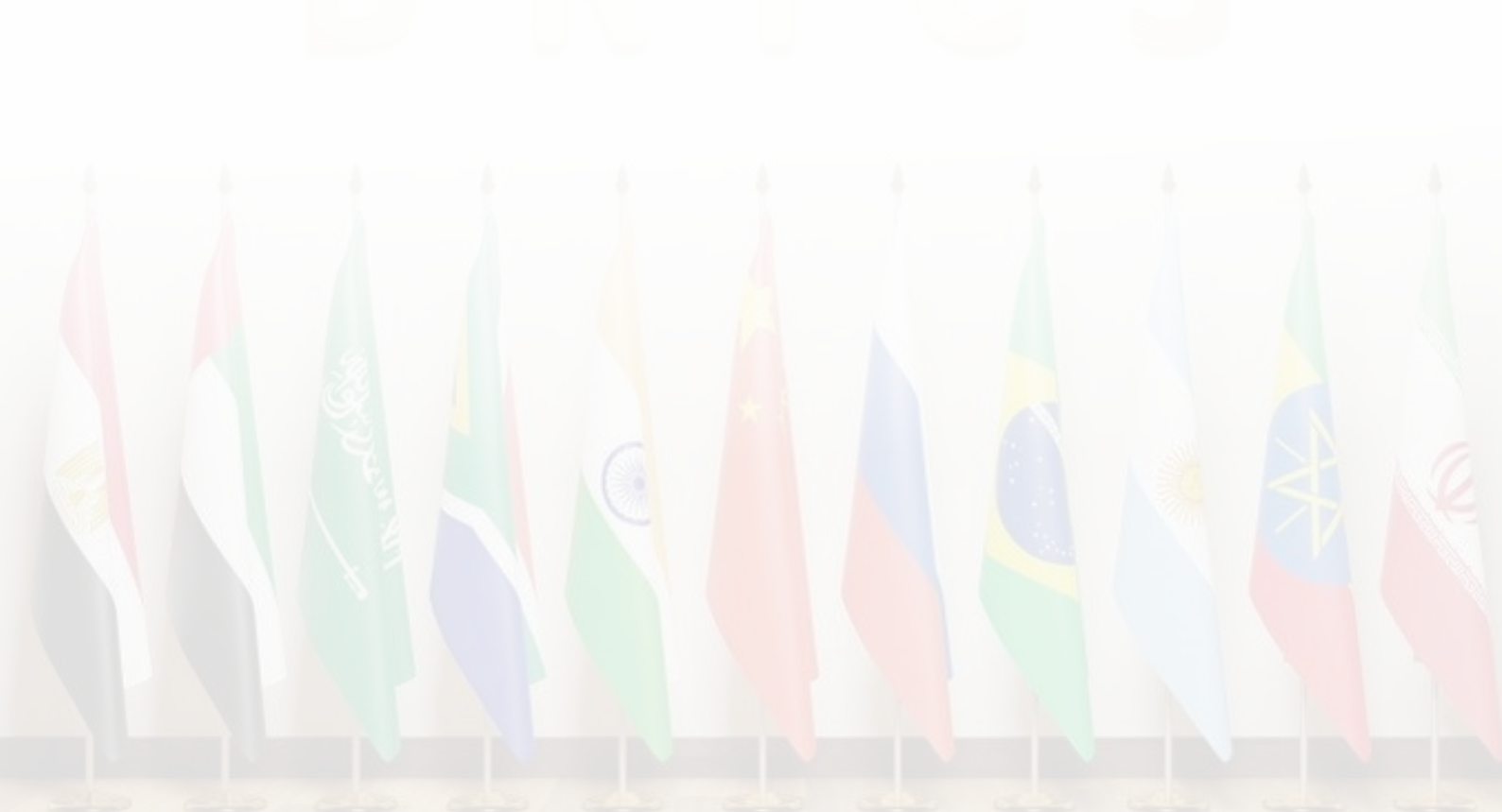
Amid ongoing global economic and geopolitical transformations, the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) has emerged as a significant player on the international stage, particularly in global economics and development. Since South Africa's accession in 2010, BRICS has directed increased attention towards the African continent, especially in the economic and trade sectors. Growing interest from African nations to join BRICS has presented significant opportunities to enhance economic partnerships with major powers and foster new avenues for development.

The inclusion of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nigeria has further elevated Africa's importance within BRICS. This partnership offers notable economic opportunities in trade, investment, and infrastructure. BRICS is supporting Africa in tackling challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity by facilitating access to new markets and promoting collaboration in innova-

tion and green energy development.

However, economic expansion in Africa faces challenges. Political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and economic governance issues hinder the continent's ability to fully capitalize on economic opportunities. Furthermore, complex dynamics with Western nations complicate relations between Africa and BRICS countries. Competition among African nations for representation in international forums also poses a challenge to full cooperation within the group.

Despite these challenges, regional cooperation strategies, such as enhancing economic integration in West Africa and increasing investments in key sectors, can contribute to comprehensive development aligned with global economic transformations. In this context, BRICS remains a key platform for Africa to bolster its economic and political standing internationally.



Introduction

Africa's presence at BRICS summits became prominent when South Africa hosted the fifth summit in 2013, themed "BRICS and Africa: Partnerships for Development, Integration, and Industrialization," which included participation from the African Union. In response to criticisms of BRICS as an exclusive group, China introduced the "BRICS+" format at the ninth summit in 2017, inviting leaders to the Emerging Markets and Developing Economies Dialogue. The tenth summit, hosted by South Africa in 2018 under the theme "BRICS in Africa: Cooperation for Growth and Shared Prosperity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution," included 21 participating countries, including several African nations. At the 2023 BRICS summit in South Africa, BRICS nations represented 42% of the world's population, 23% of global GDP, and 18% of global trade. Despite being described as a "loose association," the meeting drew significant attention, with 54 African countries participating and over 40

heads of state attending. Invitations were extended to 67 leaders, officials, business leaders, and the UN Secretary-General. Over 20 countries formally requested to join, and more than 40 others expressed interest. Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE were accepted. Following Argentina's withdrawal, the expanded group represents 45% of the global population, 25% of trade, 40% of oil production, and 28% of global nominal GDP, exceeding one-third in terms of purchasing power parity. The newly expanded BRICS population totals approximately 3.5 billion people, with an economy valued at over \$28.5 trillion.

BRICS now includes six of the world's top ten oil producers, representing about 30% of global oil production, in addition to four of the largest oil consumers. The group's expansion is expected to significantly impact global energy trade.



1 H. Zhao, D. Lesage, "Explaining BRICS Outreach: Motivations and Institutionalization", International Organizations Research Journal (Gent, Belgium: Ghent Institute for International Studies (GIIS), Ghent University – Department of Political Science, vol. 15, no 2, 2020) pp.75-79.

2 Samir Bhattacharya, Africa Weighing the Promise of BRICS+ (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2023) pp.17-18.

3 Redaction Africa news, BRICS expansion: five countries join ranks.at: <https://short-link.me/OGyh>

4 Aude Darnal and etal, The Future of BRICS: Between Objectives and Challenges, <https://short-link.me/OGyJ>

With the inclusion of Egypt and Ethiopia, two African countries with strong but underutilized economies, BRICS strengthens its economic and demographic power. Egypt was already a member of the New Development Bank, and Ethiopia is the sixth-largest economy in Africa. This is expected to mitigate financial risks and attract substantial investments, supported by improved logistical infrastructure. The increased African presence in BRICS is seen as beneficial for individual member countries: China and India are leading investors in Africa, Russia seeks to promote a multipolar world, and Brazil maintains historical ties with the African continent.

The inclusion of Egypt and Ethiopia ensures representation for both South Africa and the Northeastern African region within BRICS, paving the way for deeper relationships and new financial agreements for joint projects.

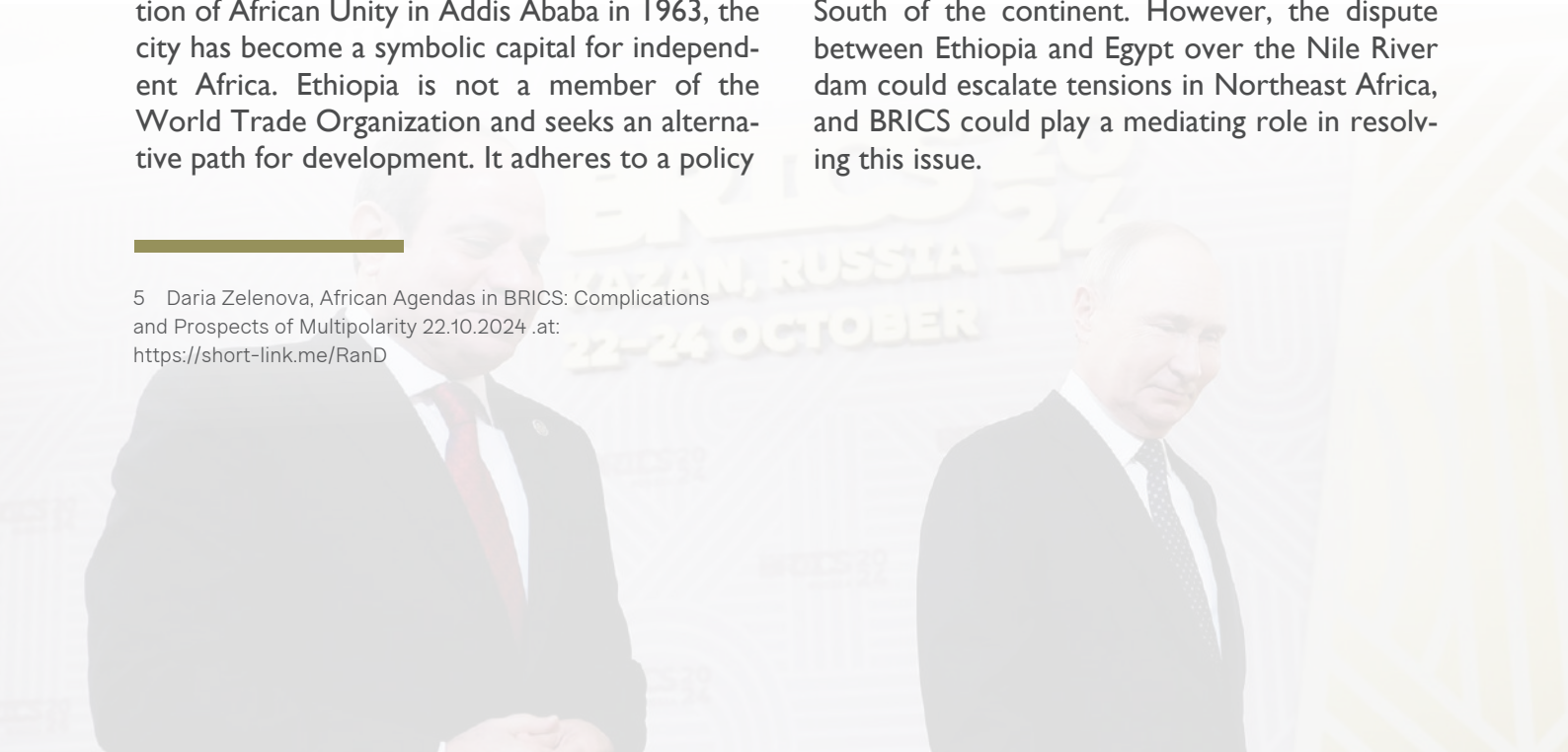
Ethiopia's membership in BRICS raises questions about its potential impact, especially given that 27% of its population of 126 million lives below the poverty line. Ethiopia's membership is viewed as a natural progression, given its historical support for African liberation movements and its role as a key center in the struggle against colonialism. Since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa in 1963, the city has become a symbolic capital for independent Africa. Ethiopia is not a member of the World Trade Organization and seeks an alternative path for development. It adheres to a policy

of non-alignment, and its stance on the Ukraine crisis in the General Assembly reflected a friendly approach towards Russia compared to other African nations.

Economically, Ethiopia plays a key role in China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. In 2023, Chinese foreign direct investment in Ethiopia accounted for approximately 39.1% of the country's total. Between 2000 and 2021, 311 Chinese projects were implemented in Ethiopia. India is Ethiopia's second-largest trading partner and foreign investor. Although trade routes in Ethiopia are not directly part of the north-south transport corridor, the country indirectly benefits from Indian infrastructure along this route. Ethiopia also continues infrastructure cooperation with the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, Ethiopia demonstrates existing economic integration with most of the BRICS infrastructure.

Egypt's participation in BRICS is primarily driven by economic factors. The proposal to launch several technological projects through the New Development Bank, which Egypt joined in December 2021, is expected to boost Egypt's exports and provide access to modern technologies. Egypt may also serve as a gateway to the Middle East and North Africa region. This integration is expected to enhance stability in the East and South of the continent. However, the dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Nile River dam could escalate tensions in Northeast Africa, and BRICS could play a mediating role in resolving this issue.

5 Daria Zelenova, African Agendas in BRICS: Complications and Prospects of Multipolarity 22.10.2024 .at: <https://short-link.me/RanD>



First: The Expected Gains for the African Continent from Joining the BRICS Group: New Economic and Developmental Opportunities

Africa has held a prominent position in BRICS summits, especially those in South Africa, where the theme "BRICS and Africa" dominated the summits in 2013, 2018, and 2023. With the BRICS countries announcing plans to expand towards "BRICS Plus," Africa received a significant portion of this expansion, with Egypt and Ethiopia gaining full membership. This reflects the increasing importance of the continent to BRICS nations and enhances mutual benefits for both sides.

• BRICS and Enhancing Africa's Role on the International Stage

African countries aim to move towards the center of global decision-making, and the inclusion of new members from the continent in BRICS marks a significant step in enabling Africa to play a more influential role internationally. This expansion also supports African efforts to gain BRICS backing for a permanent seat for the African Union in the G20. This goal is particularly significant given the G20 presidencies of India in 2023, Brazil in 2024, and South Africa in 2025. Africa has already progressed towards this goal during the 18th G20 summit in New Delhi in September 2023.

This is part of a broader effort to reform the global financial system and its institutions, including the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, to make them fairer and more aligned with the dynamics in African countries. The objective is to ensure African participation in

ing processes affecting the global economy, particularly on issues directly impacting them, such as climate change, food security, migration, energy, and international debt restructuring. These demands have gained importance due to the significant debt crisis faced by many African countries. This movement also seeks to empower African nations to play a larger role in crafting fairer and more equitable trade agreements, treating them as true partners rather than just raw material suppliers.

The inclusion of African countries in BRICS contributes to forming a stronger negotiating position to exert influence in organizations shaping global policies on critical issues. BRICS will serve as a preliminary stage for aligning the perspectives of African countries with those of BRICS members, enabling them to present a unified position in broader international forums.

• Enhancing Economic Cooperation Opportunities with BRICS

BRICS is a key global platform for multilateral efforts, where member countries engage in bilateral discussions and collective dialogue on global issues. With China, Africa's largest economic partner, alongside India, Russia, and Brazil, who are increasingly focusing on Africa in their development plans, the inclusion of African countries in BRICS creates opportunities to enhance economic cooperation with these nations and other new members.

This membership also aids in attracting more investments to Africa, particularly in vital sectors, creating new sources of development financing.



Africa's expanded membership in BRICS can support the promotion of trade across the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), furthering the continent's economic and social transformation. BRICS countries can also establish better understandings with the African nations that have joined the group, expanding cooperation within the AfCFTA framework, making it a gateway for broader collaboration across the continent.

• **Alleviating Pressures on African Economies**

Successive economic crises triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war have increased pressures on African economies due to their direct impacts and over-reliance on the US dollar in financial transactions, in addition to increased borrowing.

As part of ongoing efforts to challenge the dominance of the US dollar and promote a more equitable, reliable, and stable global financial system, BRICS nations have agreed to accelerate the use of local currencies for trade and investment transactions, while reducing dependence on the US-dollar-based global financial system. This will reduce demand for the dollar within BRICS countries and new members, potentially encouraging more African countries to adopt the

same approach, either by joining BRICS in the future or through bilateral and multilateral agreements with BRICS countries.

As a result, economic pressures can be alleviated, foreign currency pressures reduced, trade exchanges with BRICS countries enhanced, and opportunities for joint investments opened. For example, Egypt, Russia, and India discussed trading wheat, rice, and other strategic commodities in their respective currencies, which could yield tangible benefits through BRICS membership.

Given Africa's increasing financing needs and the challenges African countries face due to political conditionalities imposed by donor economic institutions, BRICS represents a promising alternative source of development project funding. The BRICS New Development Bank offers direct investments and low-interest loans without harsh conditionalities. Non-interference in the internal affairs of development partners is a central aspect of BRICS, making it attractive to many African countries. Since 2021, Egypt, Bangladesh, the UAE, and Uruguay have been accepted as members of the BRICS Bank, with expectations of adding new members in the coming years.

Second; Challenges Posed by BRICS Expansion in Africa

Despite the expected benefits for both Africa and BRICS countries from the expansion of BRICS membership, several challenges may impact the realization of these benefits:

• Widening Internal Contradictions Among BRICS Countries

BRICS countries have significantly diverse economies and foreign policy orientations, which presents a challenge for the consensus-based decision-making model within the bloc. Internal disagreements among members, such as the border dispute between India and China, political instability in Brazil, and sanctions imposed on Russia, raise doubts about the group's ability to coordinate its positions effectively. Expanding membership could further complicate coordination and increase the risk of conflicting interests, especially since Saudi Arabia and Iran remain competing powers in the Middle East, despite a Chinese-mediated agreement that helped ease tensions.

• Obstacles to Coordinating Financial Measures

While BRICS countries aim to introduce a common currency as an alternative to the dollar and local currencies, doubts remain about the feasibility of developing this new currency in the near term. Projections suggest that phasing out the dollar will be slower than expected, due to the complex economic requirements needed to issue such a currency, given the significant disparities in the size and diversity of the economies within the bloc. Additionally, trading in national currencies requires relatively balanced trade between countries to avoid accumulating unwanted currencies. For example, Russia recently sold large quantities of oil to India, with transactions conducted in rupees. However, because India's exports to Russia are much lower than its imports, Moscow now holds rupees that it

cannot use globally, except for purchasing goods from India.

• The Challenge of Western Powers

The expansion of BRICS can be seen as a challenge to Western powers, potentially intensifying geopolitical tensions. With rising tensions from the Russia-Ukraine war and increasing disagreements between the United States and China, the inclusion of countries like Iran in BRICS could deepen the divide between the group and major Western powers. This tension may negatively impact the prospects of enhancing economic returns through BRICS's development in terms of membership and activity. However, some factors may reduce the impact of this trend, most notably BRICS's focus on building a more just and inclusive multipolar global financial system, without targeting any specific party, as official statements have repeatedly emphasized.

• Debt Issue

In 2016, some BRICS members were among the largest creditors to the African continent, which could pose a future problem. Sri Lanka, for example, faced a default on its debts owed to China, leading to the handover of the Hambantota port. There are concerns that Africa may face similar challenges, as three China-backed projects in Djibouti increased the debt-to-GDP ratio from 50% in 2015 to 85% in 2016. The BRICS's financial institution needs greater transparency in its financing and loan reports and should work within financial oversight institutions to report on its credit standing. China shows few signs of increasing concessional lending to Africa, which calls for African governments to be cautious when negotiating terms that enhance cooperation between Chinese companies and local partners.

• Weak Productive Investment

BRICS declarations highlight support for infrastructure and manufacturing, but this area has not received significant attention. The manufacturing needs in Africa were not addressed in the "BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy" of 2015, the "BRICS Action Plan," or the 2017 Industrial Cooperation Deepening Report. This contrasts with the priorities of the first decade of the Agenda 2063, which targets a 7% GDP growth in Africa, with one-third of that growth generated locally through labor-intensive manufacturing, improving agricultural productivity, advancing technology, and establishing regional manufacturing hubs. Key projects for this period include developing an integrated high-speed railway network, establishing a Continental Free Trade Area, and creating a Single Air Transport Market. Although these topics were included in the Johannesburg Action Plan for the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (2016-2018) and the third India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, there is no reference to them in BRICS statements, despite being mentioned in China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor .

• Trade Barriers

Alongside these opportunities, risks emerge, including unfair trade deals that hinder manufacturing and productivity growth in Africa. China imposes lower tariffs on imports, which is similar across much of Africa, where China can export its products with very few imports, leading to the

destruction of local production and a reduction in exports. Africa has already launched the Continental Free Trade Area platform to enhance the economies of African countries. However, there are concerns that growth may be negatively affected if Africa becomes fragmented due to the expansion of BRICS.

Member states will be negatively impacted by exclusivity and trade protectionism, including increased tariffs and retaliatory measures, as well as weak global growth due to the trade war between China and the West. Additionally, intra-group trade will suffer due to higher trade costs resulting from restrictive trade policies, increased technical barriers, phytosanitary measures, anti-dumping policies, compensatory tariffs, and free trade agreements dominated by advanced countries. Structural bottlenecks such as excessive reliance on capital investments and exports, which make economies vulnerable to external shocks, will also add to these challenges. This could lead to excess liquidity flows from advanced economies, causing fluctuations in exchange rates and overvalued assets. Lastly, rising inflation rates among member countries contribute to the complexities. Consequently, poor coordination of trade policies—such as the flooding of the Brazilian market with Chinese shoes, the South African market with Chinese clothing, India imposing tariffs on certain Chinese goods, and disputes between Beijing and Moscow over oil pricing—presents significant challenges .

9 مجدي محمد محمود، إفريقيا وقمم البريكس... كازان 2024 ... ما الجديد بالنسبة لإفريقيا؟، دراسة،
قراءات إفريقية، 29 أكتوبر 2024

<https://2u.pw/5yNm8Axl>

10 أحمد دياب، البريكس تكتل القوى الصاعدة، ملف الأهرام الإستراتيجي (القاهرة: مركز
الدراسات السياسية والإستراتيجية، مؤسسة الأهرام الدولية، 2011) ص2

Third; Economic Implications: BRICS as an Economic Ally for Africa

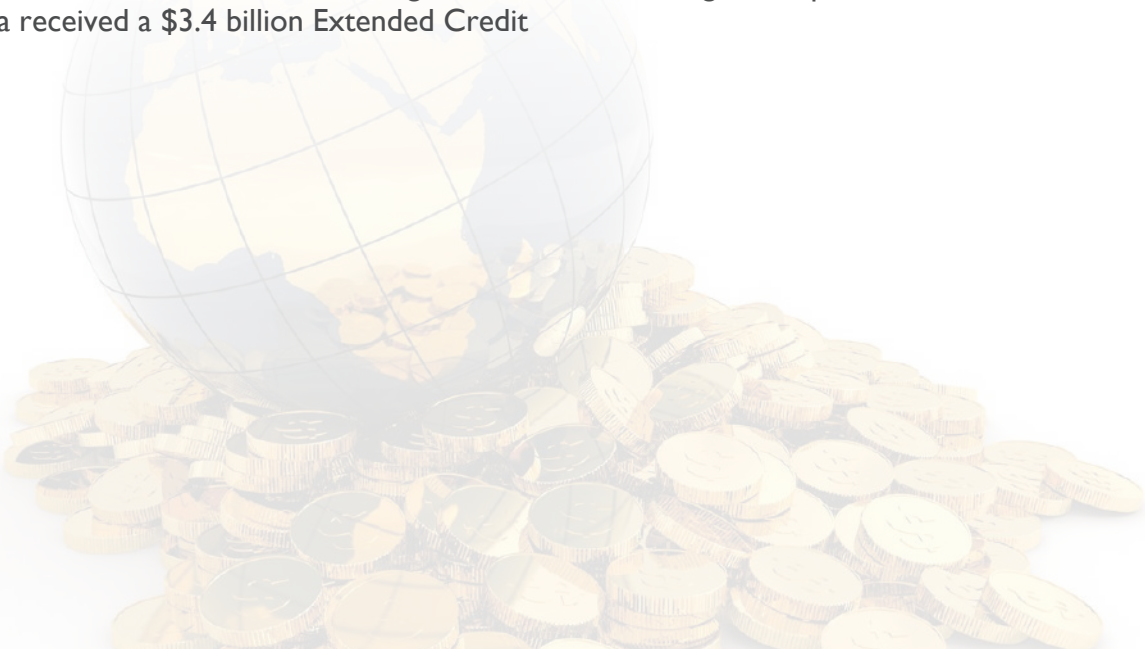
Recognizing current low levels of development, African leaders have strengthened ties with external powers while expressing frustrations over economic exploitation by traditional partner countries, the stringent conditions set by Western-led financial institutions, and the dominance of the West in the global system. Instead of relying solely on lenders like the IMF and World Bank, many African countries have started prioritizing economic cooperation with BRICS.

For instance, several African governments led by military regimes, which came to power unconstitutionally through coups, are barred from accessing the IMF and World Bank. New financial alternatives like the New Development Bank (NDB) offer countries a viable option to reduce their reliance on the U.S. dollar and ease the debt burden and sanctions weighing on them.

While African nations work to create alternative economic and administrative structures to counter the Bretton Woods institutions, both the World Bank and IMF still maintain a significant presence in Africa. For example, both Egypt and Ethiopia, members of BRICS, rely on financing from the IMF. Egypt recently secured an \$8 billion bailout amid economic challenges, while Ethiopia received a \$3.4 billion Extended Credit

Facility to help alleviate financial pressures. This indicates that moving away from dependence on the dollar and current financial institutions remains a distant goal.

However, African countries remain optimistic about securing preferential loans and funding through the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), which aims to foster economic partnerships within the BRICS Plus group and enhance access to diverse markets, thus boosting trade and investment opportunities in emerging economies. During its 9th annual meeting in South Africa from August 29-31, 2024, the NDB reaffirmed its commitment to a more inclusive and flexible financing approach, better aligned with the long-term development goals of BRICS members and other developing countries. Furthermore, the initiatives launched by BRICS to introduce new financial payment systems aimed at reducing dependence on the dollar have garnered praise from many developing countries in the Global South. While the prospect of a shared currency in the near future may be premature, countries like India and China have begun promoting trade in local currencies. This will help Africa avoid the risks associated with dollar fluctuations, providing it with more options and unlocking its full potential.



BRICS and Africa's Quest for Leadership

Africa is seeking a new kind of leadership, one that requires statesmen who understand the essentials for future global cooperation, particularly on economic issues. Many African countries aim to emulate the leadership of India, China, and other BRICS members as leaders of the Global South who promote political equality, respect for sovereignty, and justice in cooperation.

BRICS' support for the African Union in strengthening the peace process in South Sudan, and for regional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in addressing security threats facing the Central African Republic and Mozambique, underscores BRICS' endorsement of a collective African approach to tackling shared challenges.

However, the status of Ethiopia and Egypt as competing nations has raised concerns about internal cohesion among African members of BRICS. This was evident when BRICS foreign ministers unexpectedly ended a meeting in New York on September 26, 2024, due to disagreements between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding United Nations Security Council reform.

BRICS and the Grain Market in Africa

Given climate change, fragmented markets, and food insecurity, BRICS' grain market could become a key driver for the agricultural investment needed in Africa. Establishing a grain market could revolutionize Africa's agricultural landscape by stabilizing grain prices. With BRICS

facilitating a more organized market, price volatility for both producers and consumers would be significantly reduced. A BRICS-backed exchange market would help Africa diversify its export portfolio, boosting foreign currency revenues.

The Way Forward

For Africa, BRICS highlights a significant opportunity to enhance its role in global governance and development. The BRICS Youth Summit and the establishment of the BRICS Youth Council provide crucial pathways for African youth participation. The parliamentary cooperation project among BRICS countries offers a platform for African nations to engage with emerging economies on issues of governance, political stability, and policymaking. This exchange of ideas has the potential to strengthen political institutions in Africa and promote improved governance practices.

With BRICS facilitating a more organized market, price fluctuations will be significantly reduced for both producers and consumers.

However, before joining BRICS, African countries must address their internal stability and define their policy priorities. At the same time, current members of the group should focus on reviewing their core tools rather than rushing into expansion. Undoubtedly, the divergent political, economic, and cultural interests among members will hinder the group from achieving its goals. Despite the growing interest in BRICS, practical challenges exist. The way the African Union collectively addresses these challenges will ultimately determine its success.

¹¹ Samir Bhattacharya, Decoding Africa's interest in BRICS, Nov 05, 2024, <https://short-link.me/Rah5>

Why did BRICS announce Nigeria's acceptance as a partner country?

Before the new U.S. administration began its duties on January 20, 2025, other economic powers acted faster. On January 17, 2025, the Brazilian government, which holds the BRICS presidency, announced Nigeria's acceptance as a "partner country," a category introduced by BRICS in October 2024. Partner countries are considered a step below full membership.

This development has significant implications, not only for Nigeria but also for Africa and the broader global economy. In a world where emerging economies are reshaping global trade and power dynamics, Nigeria's inclusion marks a turning point. With its immense economic potential and

influence in West Africa, Nigeria's alliance with BRICS could redefine regional trade, development, and geopolitical strategies.

BRICS provides a unique platform for Nigeria, aligning with its national aspirations for inclusive growth, regional integration, and active participation in shaping a fair global economic system. This development is seen as the culmination of Nigeria's efforts, notably beginning in December 2023, where it sought not only to join BRICS but also to become a member of the G20, the group of the world's largest economies, in addition to joining the BRICS New Development Bank.



Nigeria has officially joined the BRICS group, becoming a new partner from Africa

BRICS is an alliance of major emerging economies, and Nigeria's inclusion strengthens this bloc.



Nigeria's membership underscores its commitment to

fostering developmental
partnerships

seizing economic
opportunities

promoting international
cooperation

2009

**BRICS was
established**

28%

**BRICS represents 28% of the global economy,
making it a significant economic force.**

- The group poses a challenge to the dominance of the US dollar in oil and gas trade.
- BRICS serves as a stronger counterweight to the G7 group of industrialized nations.

The BRICS group was founded in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, with South Africa joining in 2010, with the aim of achieving economic balance against the dominance of the G7 (Group of Seven industrialized countries). Since then, the bloc has expanded steadily, adding new countries such as Iran, Egypt, and Ethiopia, making the BRICS alliance represent more than 40% of the world's population and about 25% of global GDP,

while Nigeria became the ninth partner country.

The focus will be on the motivations behind Nigeria's acceptance as a partner country in BRICS, highlighting the potential economic benefits of this membership, as well as addressing the challenges and obstacles that need to be reconsidered and addressed to maximize Nigeria's potential within BRICS.

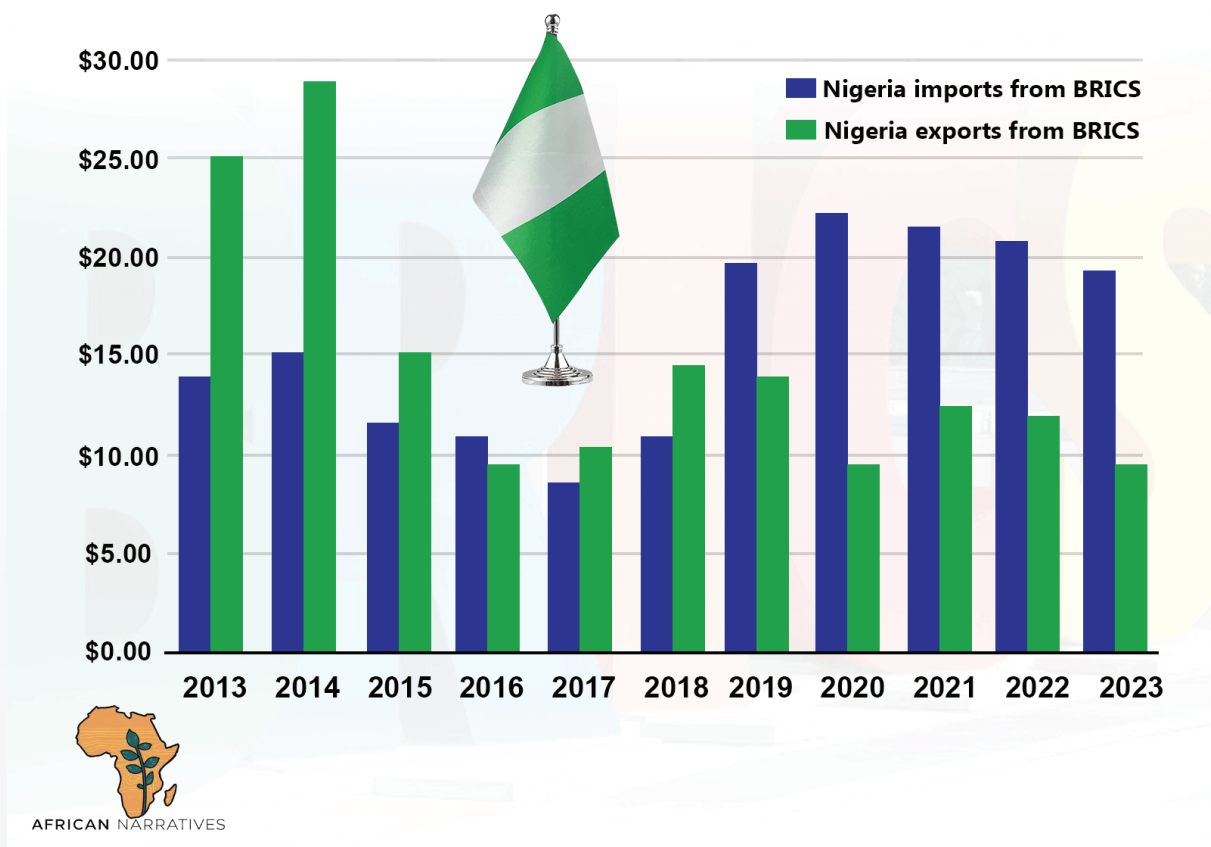
Brazil, which holds the BRICS presidency in 2025, confirmed in a statement that Nigeria, as an African country, is actively working on "enhancing cooperation in the Global South and reforming global governance," which is one of the priorities that BRICS aims to achieve.

Nigeria is the sixth-largest country in the world by population and the largest in Africa, as well as one of the largest economies on the continent, with a GDP of \$477 billion in 2022. Nigeria significantly contributes to regional and continental trade, and its oil and gas sector, which holds confirmed reserves of 37.1 billion barrels, generates more than \$20 billion annually. Meanwhile, its non-oil exports, including agriculture and manufacturing, are steadily growing. Nigeria represents more than 70% of the GDP of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), making its partnership with BRICS potentially a game-changer in the region.

In addition to its vast market potential and strategic location in West Africa, Nigeria shares converging interests with other members of the group. This comes at a time when the world is watching the policies of U.S. President Trump towards the Global South, particularly China, as he had previously threatened to impose a 100% tariff on BRICS countries if they moved to undermine the U.S. dollar.

Nigeria's membership also contributes to enhancing the group's influence in international affairs, especially concerning African and developing countries' issues. Nigeria's accession to BRICS has far-reaching implications for the global economy, potentially having a ripple effect throughout the continent and beyond. By aligning itself with other emerging economies, Nigeria can play a role in shaping the future of global trade, investment, and developmental cooperation.

Nigeria's foreign trade (import and export) with BRICS countries during the period 2013-2023.



Dimensions of Nigeria's Accession as a Partner to the BRICS Group

As global interest in the BRICS group continues to grow, the Brazilian government announced on January 18, 2025, that Nigeria has joined the group as a partner country, becoming the ninth partner of BRICS, following Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

- Increasing appeal of BRICS membership due to its growing economic weight (contributing 37.3% of global output, with around 30 countries seeking to join the group).
- BRICS' aim to deepen its relationships with partner countries to enhance economic cooperation among developing nations (Nigeria, with the sixth-largest population globally, is one of Africa's major economies).
- Nigeria's efforts to strengthen its trade and investment ties with BRICS member countries, especially China, its largest trading partner (bilateral trade between Nigeria and China reached \$13.6 billion in 2023).

As Nigeria continues to improve its business environment, its ability to attract investments from BRICS countries will depend on its political stability, with potential for boosting trade with BRICS nations using local currencies (in 2024, China and Nigeria renewed a currency swap agreement worth approximately \$2 billion).

Nigeria's "Political" Objectives for Joining BRICS

In support of qualitative cooperation that enables Nigeria to face economic crises, and with the aim of affirming its commitment to diversifying partnerships, Nigeria announced on January 19, 2025, its accession to the BRICS group as a partner country (a newly introduced form of cooperation to be enjoyed by 8 countries). Nigeria expressed its aspiration for a strategic partnership that will enable it to develop trade, investment, and social and economic cooperation.

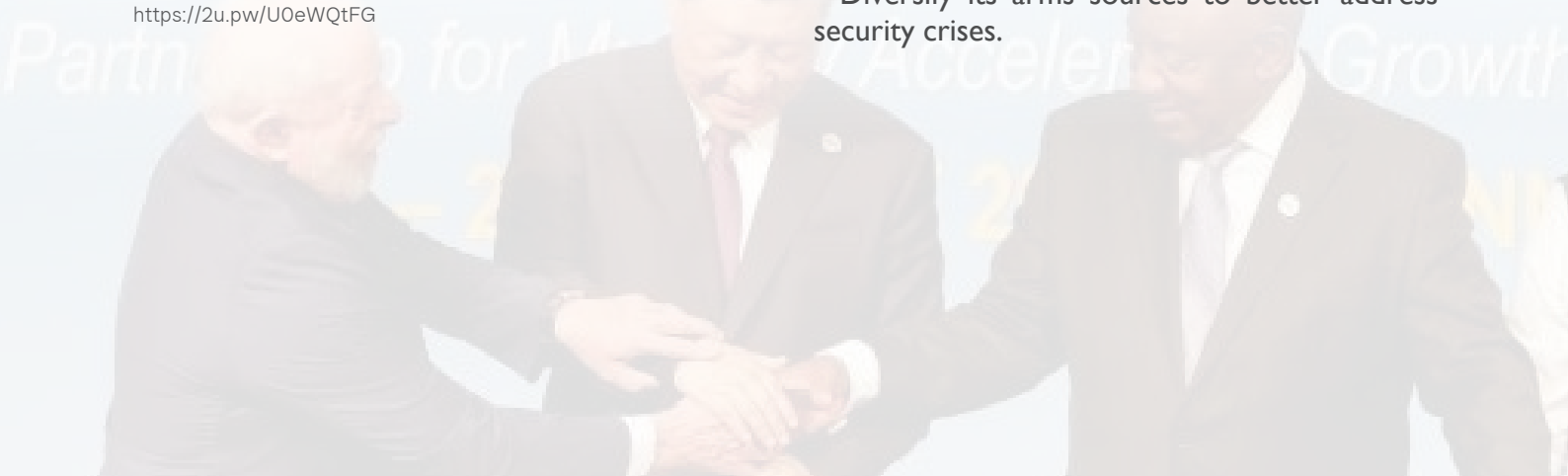
Along with economic gains, Nigeria seeks the following from its relationship with BRICS:

- Supporting the economic "reformist" steps of President Bola Tinubu, which are facing societal and political pressures (currency depreciation and high inflation rates).
- Promoting its political and diplomatic weight and its neutrality on international partnerships, aiming to gain "exceptional" support (and to avoid being accused of serving the U.S. and French agendas in Africa).
- Competing with newly joined African powers in BRICS (Egypt, Ethiopia, and previously South Africa) to represent Africa in international forums (e.g., the UN Security Council, if membership is reformed).

Leveraging its position in BRICS, Nigeria is expected to intensify its efforts to:

- Bargain with the West for increased support for government measures and to reduce human rights pressures.
- Diversify its arms sources to better address security crises.

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Economic and Geopolitical Implications of Nigeria's Accession to BRICS for Africa

Nigeria's accession to BRICS holds promises of increased African influence on the global stage and enhanced economic development. Nigeria will serve as a bridge between Africa and BRICS members, promoting a shift from a world system dominated by the United States and Western powers to a multipolar world. Additionally, BRICS provides a platform to discuss common solutions to issues such as poverty, unemployment, and deteriorating infrastructure in Africa.

Furthermore, BRICS' partnership with Nigeria elevates Africa's voice globally, particularly in advocating for fair trade practices and financial reforms. With China and India already being major trade partners for the continent, BRICS offers African nations a means to negotiate better terms for resource exploitation and debt restructuring.

This is particularly evident for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Nigeria's expanding influence highlights the importance of regional unity and cooperation. Nigeria's inclusion in BRICS marks a turning point for West Africa and the continent as a whole. This strategic partnership offers new pathways for trade, development, and economic integration. It could also enhance Nigeria's global standing, strengthening ECOWAS's ability to address security challenges in the Sahel region, which have hampered development efforts. However, to fully realize these benefits, regional leaders must embrace cooperation, invest in innovation, and implement strategies that leverage shared strengths to achieve collective progress. As the global balance of power shifts, West Africa stands ready to shape its destiny through strategic alliances like BRICS.





In conclusion:

The BRICS bloc has shown increasing interest in Africa since the African Union was invited to participate in the 2013 South Africa summit. When the bloc decided to admit new members in 2023, Africa was represented by 40% of the invitees. At the Kazan Summit in Russia in 2024, two African countries were among the thirteen countries with partial membership, with seventeen African countries expressing a desire to join.

Africa has been a central focus in four BRICS summits (2013, 2018, 2023, and 2024), with the Kazan summit declaration highlighting the importance of strengthening the BRICS-Africa partnership to unlock mutually beneficial opportunities in trade, investment, and infrastructure development.

Through these summits, Africa sought to explore new economic pathways, innovate in research fields, and find effective solutions to the continent's challenges such as climate change, green energy, and food security. There was also an emphasis on strengthening knowledge systems in Africa. Although three major African countries are regionally represented in the bloc, this does not mean the continent is fully represented.

Despite the potential benefits for African countries joining BRICS, there are challenges and risks they may face. However, African nations can overcome these by establishing balanced relationships with BRICS and ensuring mutual benefits, as well as addressing the complex dynamics with the West through cooperation between BRICS and the African Union.

While the Kazan Summit created diplomatic momentum and international gains, the final statement presents important new ideas. However, implementing these ideas will take time, as the proposals are still nascent.