



Building A Stronger BRICS

This editorial is based on [“Building Peace and Prosperity with Strong BRICS”](#) which was published in The Hindu on 30/05/2022. It talks about the challenges associated with the effective functioning of the BRICS grouping and suggests possible areas of cooperation.

For Prelims: BRICS countries, New Development Bank, Fortaleza Declaration, BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement

For Mains: Significance of BRICS, Issues within BRICS, India's relations with other BRICS countries.

Sixteen years after its creation, [BRICS](#) has become an important platform for **win-win cooperation among China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa**, and a significant force for the **evolution of international order**, the improvement of global governance and the promotion of **common development**.

Although the grouping has succeeded up to a point, it confronts multiple challenges such as **conflicts within the member countries** or the **China-centricity** of the grouping.

With China taking over the BRICS chairmanship this year, it is even more important for the BRICS partners to press ahead with **cooperation in geopolitics, security, economy & finance, people-to-people exchanges, public health** and other realms.

What do We need to Know about the BRICS?

- BRICS is an acronym for the **grouping of the world's leading emerging economies**, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
 - In 2001, the British Economist **Jim O'Neill** coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
 - South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
 - The grouping was formalised during the **first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006**.
- The BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing **41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP** and **16% of the global trade**.
- During the **Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza** (Brazil) in 2014, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the [New Development Bank](#) (NDB - Shanghai, China).
 - They also signed the **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement** to provide short-term liquidity support to the members.

Why must Engagement be Strengthened within the BRICS?

- The world today witnesses increasing **factors of instability, uncertainty and insecurity**.
 - It is of great significance for the **BRICS nations to reach consensus** and outcomes on multiple important issues concerning **global security and development**.
- A **stronger BRICS will strengthen solidarity and cooperation** in the face of challenges with firm conviction, and **take real actions to promote peace** and development, and uphold fairness and justice. BRICS will **inject more strength into global development**.

What are the Challenges Associated to BRICS?

- **Marred by Various Issues:** Group has seen conflicts such as [China's aggression in eastern Ladakh](#) which brought India-China relations to their lowest point in several decades.
 - There is also the reality of the **strained relations of China and Russia with the West**, and of **serious internal challenges** preoccupying both Brazil and South Africa.
 - On the other hand, China's image at global level has also been tarnished due to the Covid-19.
- **Heterogeneity:** It is claimed by critics that heterogeneity (variable/diverse nature of countries) of the **BRICS nations with its diverse interests** possess a **threat to the viability** of the grouping.
- **China Centric:** All the countries in the BRICS group trade with China more than each other, therefore it is blamed as a **platform to promote China's interest**. Balancing trade deficit with China is a huge challenge for other partner nations.
- **Not Been Effective:** The five-power combine has succeeded, albeit up to a point. However, **China's economic rise has created a serious imbalance** within BRICS.
 - Also the group has **not done enough to assist the Global South** to win their optimal support for their agenda.

What can be the Possible Areas of Cooperation within BRICS?

- **Cooperation Within the Group:** BRICS need to **shed the centrality from China** and create a **better internal balance**, reinforced by the urgent need for diversification.
 - For BRICS to remain relevant over the next decades, each of its members must make a **realistic assessment of the opportunities** and inherent limitations.
 - The grouping shall also **explore the 'BRICS plus' cooperation at more levels** and in a wider scope.
 - This will **increase BRICS countries' representation and influence** and make greater contributions to world peace and development.
- **Upholding Universal Security:** BRICS countries should be builders of universal security. Seeking one's own security at the expense of others' will only create new tensions and risks.
 - It is important to **respect and guarantee the security of every country, replace confrontation with dialogue** and partnership, and promote the building of a **balanced, effective and sustainable regional security** architecture.
 - Also, it is equally important to **strengthen political mutual trust and security cooperation**, maintain communication and **coordination on major international and regional issues** and accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns.
- **Securing Economic Interests:** BRICS countries should be **contributors of common development**.
 - Facing the rising tide of de-globalisation and the increase of unilateral sanctions, BRICS countries should **enhance mutually-beneficial cooperation in supply chains**, energy, food and financial resilience
 - Also, it will be useful for BRICS to **develop an institutional research wing, along the lines of the OECD**, offering solutions which are better suited to the developing world.
- **Public Health Governance:** BRICS countries should fully leverage their respective strengths, and jointly **promote the development of global health governance** in a direction in favour of developing countries.
 - India's vision of **'One Earth, One Health'** contributes to multilateral cooperation on public health.
 - The countries should make good use of the **BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre**, establish a **BRICS early warning mechanism for preventing large-scale**

infectious diseases, and provide high-quality public goods for global health governance cooperation.

- **A Global Governance Philosophy:** Global challenges are emerging one after another. Coping with these challenges requires **coordination among global actions**.
 - Safeguarding the international system is essential while ensuring that **international affairs have participation by all**, international rules are formulated by all, and **development outcomes are shared by all**.
 - BRICS should embrace a global governance philosophy that emphasises **extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, enhance unity** and cooperation with emerging markets and developing countries, and increase the voice in global governance.

Drishti Mains Question

“The world today witnesses increasing factors of instability, uncertainty and insecurity. It is of great significance for the BRICS nations to reach consensus on multiple important issues concerning global security and development”. Discuss the possible areas where the nations can collaborate.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. New Development Bank has been set up by APEC.
2. The headquarters of New Development Bank is in Shanghai.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. The ‘Fortaleza Declaration’, recently in the news, is related to the affairs of (2015)

- (a) ASEAN
- (b) BRICS
- (c) OECD
- (d) WTO

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to a grouping of countries known as BRICS, consider the following statements: (2014)

1. The First Summit of BRICS was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009.
2. South Africa was the last to join the BRICS grouping.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

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