

Video: BRICS: The Quest for a Just Multipolar World

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Theme: [Global Economy](#)

Global Research, September 14, 2023

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The BRICS Summit that concluded on the 24th of August 2023 in Johannesburg is a significant milestone in the journey towards a multipolar world.

From 5 members, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa it has now expanded into a 11-member alliance with the addition of Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. At the same time the new BRICS signals the decline of a unipolar world led by the United States of America.

The BRICS population which was more than 3 billion now has grown to 3.6 billion.

This is about 46% of the total global population. At least 17 other countries have expressed interest in joining BRICS. One hopes that Indonesia will become part of BRICS in the near future, drawing Southeast Asia, one of the most significant regions of the world, into the alliance.

BRICS should not be confined to the Global South. Nations in the Global North that also subscribe to the goal of a multipolar world where power and prosperity, scientific knowledge and cultural achievements are shared equitably by all, should also be invited to join BRICS.

Apart from embracing all those who are sincerely committed to justice, equality and freedom for the entire human family, BRICS should also harness its other strengths. What are these strengths? We shall mention just 3 of them.

Command Over Energy

1. It is expected that BRICS will account for 47.6% of the world's total oil production.
2. It is expected that BRICS will control 39% of the world's total oil exports.
3. In terms of oil reserves, the expanded BRICS will control half of the world's total of 1.6 trillion barrels of oil.

Control Over Metals Used in the High-technology Industry

1. BRICS will account for 79% of the global aluminum output.
2. In the case of palladium, 77% of this metal will come from BRICS' countries.

Role in Food Production

1. BRICS will account for almost half of total food production.
2. It is expected that wheat harvest in BRICS countries will amount to 49% of the world's total.

Because of these inherent and explicit strengths, BRICS should address some of the major flaws in contemporary society. One of these is the unilateral imposition of economic sanctions upon states that are not prepared to toe the US line or states that are determined to protect their sovereignty and independence at all costs—states such as Iran or Cuba or Venezuela or Bolivia.

Unilateral economic sanctions should be prohibited even if they are endorsed by the UN or any of its entities. Unilateral economic sanctions should be banned as long as they emanate from a state or a coalition of states. As a rule, sanctions should be disallowed. If they are unavoidable in some extraordinary situation—like sanctions against a state practising apartheid—sanctions should be endorsed by at least four-fifths of the UN General Assembly.

BRICS should try to achieve this goal—that is, eliminating sanctions except in an extraordinary situation where sanctions are ratified by four-fifths of the UNGA.

Of course, there will be a lot of opposition to this proposal. Even as it is, there is a great deal of opposition to BRICS as reflected in the vociferous criticism of the organisation within a segment of the Western media in the wake of the recent BRICS Summit. Even elements in the non-western media have attacked BRICS vehemently. From the very beginning, in 2008 when BRICS was launched, there has been strong opposition from various quarters.

BRICS should not dismiss outright these criticisms whatever the source and whatever the motive. Instead, BRICS both as a collectivity and its individual members should reflect deeply on these criticisms and try to make changes where necessary. There are also criticisms of relations between and among BRICS' states. These should also be addressed seriously. The same goes for criticisms of BRICS as an entity.

Criticisms of BRICS should reinforce its resolve to pursue the goal of a just multipolar world with greater vigour. For a multipolar world is an idea whose time has come. No force on earth will be able to thwart its emergence. It is our responsibility — citizens of planet Earth— to ensure that this laudable goal is achieved peacefully and as soon as possible. Let us remind ourselves that at the heart of a multipolar world is the cherished dream of the dignity of all human beings, indeed of the whole of creation.

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