



# The big five at 10-BRICS has grown in influence in its first decade but is still far from achieving its initial goals

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BRICS, or the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has produced a 102-paragraph-long Johannesburg Declaration, one of the longest in recent years.

There is little doubt that BRICS has grown in influence, expanded the arc of its interests, and established new institutions and partnerships in its first decade. More importantly, it has created for its members the habits of working together. Intra-BRICS cooperation is on a rising trajectory.

Yet, the fact remains that BRICS is still far from achieving its initial goals: **reform of global financial governance, democratisation of the United Nations, and expansion of the Security Council** — partially because two of its members (China and Russia) do not want the other three members (India, South Africa and Brazil) to obtain parity in the global pecking order.

## **Highlights of Summit:**

- In this backdrop, the 10th summit, held last week, framed its deliberations against U.S. President Donald Trump's unconventional approach on world affairs, particularly the looming trade wars.
- BRICS leaders stressed **"the centrality of the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading"**, based on the World Trade Organisation. This stemmed from their broader commitment to cooperate for strengthening multilateralism, the rule of law and an equitable international order.
- The other big idea emanating from the summit is to help nations to prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- The summit saw further consolidation of the business pillar. The BRICS Business Council has been actively enhancing trade and economic cooperation in diverse sectors ranging from manufacturing and energy to financial services and regional aviation. Besides, the leaders renewed their commitment to an inclusive and "people-centred approach" on development. The steady progress in interactions through sports, films, education, culture and tourism has been commendable.
- China introduced the "BRICS Plus" format at the Xiamen summit last year by inviting a few countries from different regions.
- As a partnership that represents over 40% of the world's population and accounts for 22% of global GDP, BRICS will continue to be an influential voice as long as its convergences prevail over its divergences. Changing power equations within BRICS are

being watched closely. China's dominance is a reality even as the grouping asserts the sovereign equality of all members. China-Russia proximity has been a continuing factor. Given its political and economic travails, Brazil played a low-profile role.

- The India-South Africa partnership helped to ensure that the Johannesburg Declaration was balanced and well-rounded in its orientation.

The critical question is whether BRICS's exertions will have appreciable impact on G-7, the grouping of the developed countries, which is in disarray, and particularly on the U.S. administration.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

