



India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral Forum: An Appraisal of Summits

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Introduction

After a gap of more than six years the 8th India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting was held on October 17, 2017 in Durban, South Africa.¹ During the meeting the Ministers of the IBSA countries underscored the importance of the trilateral forum for South-South Cooperation as well as the need to leverage its strengths and unique identity as a grouping of the Global South, bringing together three large pluralistic, multi-cultural and multi-racial societies from three continents. Further, the Ministers expressed their full support to India for its preparations to host the 6th IBSA Summit in New Delhi in 2018.¹ Noteworthy, and like the ministerial meetings, the last IBSA Summit of Heads of State and Government took place more than 6 years ago. Although the leaders of the forum expressed their intentions to hold the summit several times prior to the recent announcement, no specified date could be scheduled.

In the light of the fact that the grouping has been dormant in terms of holding summits for more than six years, and the ministers expressing their full support to hold IBSA Summit in 2018, this paper seeks to review the progress made in different IBSA Summits at the Heads of State and Government level. In doing so, a comparative analysis of the five summits as well as the progress in implementation of the commitments on important issues is undertaken.

¹ The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa H.E Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, the Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India, H.E General (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd.) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil, H.E Mr Aloysio Nunes Ferreira attended the meeting.

Genesis and Significance

IBSA is a Trilateral Dialogue Forum of India, Brazil and South Africa which was created in the year 2003. The concept was mooted at a meeting between the then Prime Minister of India (Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee) and the then Presidents of Brazil and South Africa (President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and President Thabo Mbeki) in Evian, France on June 2, 2003 on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit. The grouping was formalised under the name of the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia on June 6, 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration. The group was further consolidated in the year 2006 when the first IBSA Summit of Heads of State and Government was held in Brasilia.ⁱⁱ Prior to this, Ministerial Meetings of the Trilateral Commission were held in New Delhi in 2004, in Cape Town in 2005 and Rio de Janeiro in March 2006. Additionally, trilateral working groups were created in the areas of agriculture, culture, defense, education, energy, information society, trade and investment, science and technology, tourism, transportation and others. The commitments which emerged out these interactions eventually formed the basis of the agenda at the IBSA Summit in 2006. Also, during the three years till its first summit, the Heads of the State and Government met in different meetings in New York in the year 2003 and 2005.ⁱⁱⁱ

The main objective of the forum was to be “instrumental” in “*promoting ever closer coordination on global issues between the three large multicultural and multiracial democracies of Asia, South America and Africa, and contribute to enhancing trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa cooperation in sectoral areas.*” The forum, consisting of three large developing democracies across different regions, was considered an important platform in promoting South-South cooperation.^{iv}

So far, five IBSA Summits have been held: First IBSA Summit in Brasilia, Brazil on September 13, 2006; the second in Tshwane, South Africa on October 17, 2007; the third in New Delhi, India on October 15, 2008; fourth in Brasilia, Brazil on April 15, 2010 and; the fifth in Pretoria, South Africa on October 18, 2011. As Table 1 indicates there was a break between the third and the fourth summit. Despite the third IBSA Summit Declaration of 2008 announcing that the fourth summit would take place in Brazil in October 2009, the summit was postponed to 2010 for the failure to schedule a date convenient for the three countries. The global economic crisis and the creation of a new grouping, Brazil- Russia-India- China (BRIC), may have influenced such decision. On June 16, 2009, Russia hosted the first BRIC Leaders’ Summit, which was attended by Brazil’s President Lula, Russia’s President Dimitry Medvedev, India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and China’s President Hu Jintao, in Yekaterinburg.^v The next year South Africa also joined the grouping and attended the 3rd BRICS Summit in Sanya, China on April 14, 2011.^{vi}

Since 2011, IBSA had not held regular Heads of State and Government Summit. However, there have been attempts to schedule dates for holding the sixth summit. The sixth Summit was initially scheduled to be held in India in June 2013. Thereafter, announcements were made to hold the summit in 2015 and 2017 in New Delhi, but could not materialise due to scheduling issues.^{vii} Although the 8th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting

announced that the sixth summit would take place in New Delhi in 2018, but a date is yet to be specified.

IBSA: A Summit Level Analysis

Table 1 suggests that since its inception IBSA has consolidated a large number of IBSA's common positions in the communiqués of Heads of State and Government in areas such as global governance, trade and sustainable development, health, energy and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The most important commitment of the leaders at the IBSA summits is their commitment to contribute to the construction of a new international architecture by reaffirming their stand on reforming the global governance that allows for a stronger role for developing countries, including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In each summit, reforming the UNSC by expanding the permanent and non-permanent membership which would provide greater representation to the developing countries remained the central theme. They also took common positions on reforming the IMF quota system to make it more representative and legitimate. In reforming the Bretton Wood Institutions, the leaders also acknowledged the role of the G20 as a key forum on global economic development and governance.

From the very beginning, the IBSA Summit largely focused on augmenting trade and connectivity among the three countries. In this regards, the leaders have consistently urged the need for sustained efforts to promote the development dimension of the Doha Round of negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). One of the most significant commitments of the IBSA towards enhancing economic ties was the initiative to establish the MERCOSUR-SACU-India Trilateral Free Trade Agreement (T-FTA) that can strongly contribute to international trade as well promote their respective development goals. In this direction, the leaders welcomed the First Trilateral MERCOSUR-SACU-India Ministerial Meeting which was held in Geneva on November 30, 2009.^{viii} The IBSA Maritime Transportation Agreement was also concluded during the first IBSA summit for fostering trilateral trade flows and ensuring connectivity. To further boost trade and connectivity, the Five Year Action Plan for Maritime Transport and Five Year Plan for Civil Aviation were also welcomed during the 3rd Summit in 2008.^{ix}

In the wake of the global economic crisis in 2008, the Leaders emphasised the need to increase policy coordination amongst G20 nations to avert a new recession and to promote a robust global economic recovery. Stressing the importance of implementing the international commitments for financial regulatory reforms, they renewed their commitment to the timely implementation of the BASEL III agreement.^x

Another significant achievement of the IBSA Forum is its development cooperation projects in less-developed countries through the IBSA Facility Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger. The Fund is considered as a “remarkable example of cooperation among three developing countries and constitutes a pioneering initiative to implement South-South cooperation for the benefit of other Southern countries in partnership with the UN system.”^{xi} The IBSA has partnered with developing countries, especially least-developed countries

(LDCs), through the IBSA Fund in development projects, which have been successfully implemented in countries, including Burundi, Cape, Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Laos, Cambodia, Palestine and others.^{xii} Recognising the effectiveness of the Fund, the three countries signed the IBSA Trust Fund Agreement to which IBSA countries contribute \$1 million each annually on October 17, 2017 during the 8th Ministerial Meeting.^{xiii} This indicates the importance and recognition of the IBSA Fund in the context of South-South developmental cooperation.

Additionally, the IBSA leaders have taken common positions on other important global issues including disarmament and non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, terrorism, health, education, climate change, energy and gender, aimed at deepening South-South cooperation in these areas over the years. For instance, during the fourth IBSA Summit in Brasilia in 2010, the creation of the IBSA satellite program was announced to address common challenges in climate change, agriculture and food security. Carrying forward this commitment, Tshwane Declaration noted that India had agreed to host an IBSA satellite technical meeting to discuss the satellite project^{xiv}. Similarly, the IBSA Leaders welcomed the signing of Framework Cooperation on Information Society aimed at reducing the digital divide and ensuring digital cooperation and inclusion during its first summit in 2006, as well as recommended the establishment of IBSA Internet Governance and Development Observatory.^{xv}

Keeping up with its commitments in the education sector, on November 28, 2016, the IBSA Visiting Fellowship Programme was launched to encourage exchange of scholars from the three countries to conduct joint research that would facilitate meaningful policy inputs to carry the IBSA process forward.^{xvi}

The various Leaders' Summit Declarations also suggest that the leaders of the IBSA Forum have been involved in promoting regional security and cooperation since its inception. The most significant step towards regional cooperation is its firm support to NEPAD as the "key African Union socio-economic programme for Africa".^{xvii} Since the second summit in 2007, the leaders resolved to support NEPAD and its full integration into the AU structures, and the re-naming of its Secretariat to NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).^{xviii}

Overall, and as Table 1 indicates, the declarations of the IBSA Summits are mainly a reiteration and reaffirmation of one another, with development being the major priority area of cooperation.

Table 1: IBSA Cooperation: Review of Achievements

| Summits | 1 st IBSA Summit - 13 September, 2006 in Brasilia (Brazil) | 2 nd IBSA Summit - 17 October, 2007 in Tshwane (South Africa) | 3 rd IBSA Summit - 15 October, 2008 in New Delhi (India) | 4 th IBSA Summit - 15 April, 2010 in Brasilia (Brazil) | 5 th IBSA Summit - 18 October, 2011 in Pretoria (South Africa) |
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| Global Governance | <p>To strengthen the multilateral system, particularly through institutions through common approaches to reform the United Nations, to include developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America in both its permanent and non-permanent categories, so as to reflect contemporary realities and make it more democratic, legitimate, representative and responsive.</p> <p>The successful conclusion of the Doha Round in the</p> | <p>Reiterated the importance of strengthening the global governance system.</p> <p>Reform of the Security Council is central to this process of ensuring contemporary realities, in both permanent and non permanent categories of membership, with greater representation of the developing countries, and agreed to further strengthen cooperation amongst their countries and with other member states interested in a genuine reform of the Security Council.</p> <p>Acknowledged the role of the G20 as a key forum on global economic development and governance, and looked forward to its contribution to accelerating governance reforms in the Bretton Woods</p> | <p>Reiterated support for a genuine reform of the Security Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with greater representation for developing countries, to ensure that its composition reflects contemporary realities.</p> <p>Stressed the need for a new international initiative to bring about structural reforms in the world's financial system in the wake of global financial crisis by ensuring the full participation of developing countries and making it more</p> | <p>Expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of its membership, with increased participation of developing countries in both the UN and UNSC.</p> <p>Stressed the need to reform the Bretton Woods Institutions in order to increase their effectiveness and enhance their accountability, credibility and legitimacy by increasing the role of developing countries in these institutions.</p> | <p>The leaders recalled their joint collaboration in the UNSC and other relevant international fora such as the UN Specialised Agencies and groupings such as the G20, G24, WTO, WIPO, BASIC, BRICS, and G77 + China.</p> <p>Reaffirmed the urgent reform of the United Nations (UN) to render it more democratic and consistent with the current geopolitical reality by expanding the permanent and non-permanent categories of UNSC membership, with increased participation of developing countries which will</p> |

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| | <p>WTO, with the development dimension at the core of its outcome, environmental issues, in particular improved access to renewable energy technologies, and the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially the rights of countries of origin over their own genetic resources as well as the protection of associated traditional knowledge.</p> <p>Expressed the view that the legitimacy of the IMF depends on a fundamental reform of quotas and voice that is more</p> | <p>Institutions to provide a greater voice for and participation by developing countries</p> | <p>inclusive and transparent.</p> | | <p>reflect its representativeness and legitimacy.</p> <p>In this context, they discussed the G4 initiative of a draft resolution on expansion of the Security Council in both categories and improvement of its working methods, and which should be considered as the basis for further discussion in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the UNSC reform.</p> <p>In this context, the IBSA countries declared support for each other's aspirations for permanent seats in a reformed United Nations Security Council as well as encouraged coalitions of developing countries, devoted to</p> |
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| | <p>representative of developing countries. The reform must effectively reduce the serious imbalance between the ample majority of voting power now held by advanced economies and the unsatisfactory participation of developing countries.</p> | | | | <p>the process of UNSC reform..</p> <p>Early implementation of the targets for the reform of the International Monetary Fund relating to the mandate, representation, scope, governance, responsibility, responsiveness and development orientation of the Fund.</p> <p>In this direction, the Leaders emphasised that reform of the international financial institutions should be carried out in accordance with G20 commitments, with the objective of achieving an equitable distribution of voting power between developed and developing countries consistent with their</p> |
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| | | | | | participation in the world economy. Also, the Heads and senior leadership of all international institutions should be appointed through an open, transparent and merit-based process beginning with the selection of the next President of the World Bank in 2012. |
| Trade and Development | <p>Committed to strengthening the multilateral trading system in a more development-friendly fashion, aimed at promoting economic growth and employment and reduction of poverty.</p> <p>Putting an end to trade distorting policies.</p> <p>The Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP)</p> | <p>Commitment to make contribution to market opening in the Doha Round in agriculture, NAMA, and services that will create new trade flows.</p> <p>Removal of long-standing distortions and restrictions in international agricultural trade, such as subsidies and trade barriers that affect the agricultural exports of and domestic production in developing countries as key to the conclusion of the Doha Round.</p> <p>Special and differential</p> | <p>Emphasised the importance of concluding the Doha Round to achieve its development objectives, which had assumed even greater significance in the wake of the global financial and food crises.</p> <p>Reaffirmed the importance of granting support to the goal of the envisaged MERCOSUR-SACU-India Trilateral Trade Arrangement (TTA) at</p> | <p>As international trade experiences its sharpest decline due to global economic crisis, a development oriented, balanced and successful conclusion of the Round at an early date would bolster the credibility of the multilateral trading system in the face of increased protectionist pressures and would be instrumental in economic recovery, particularly in job creation</p> | <p>Reiterated that the Doha Development Round reflect an imbalance in the sense that there is too much accommodation of the sensitivities of developed countries in agriculture, alongside unjust demands on developing countries to open their markets in the services and industrial sectors.</p> <p>The Leaders expressed concern at initiatives, such as a standstill on tariffs that remove</p> |

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| | <p>has a crucial role to play in the new geography of trade, in which South-South trade is recognised as an important dynamic force. The GSTP can contribute decisively to foster new trade flows, supplement the current regional arrangements, and promote the diversification of export products and markets. The GSTP can be particularly effective in involving LDCs in the global trading system, providing them preferential access and devising other possible measures in their support</p> <p>Signing of the IBSA Action Plan on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and</p> | <p>treatment, which includes development instruments of Special Products and the Special Safeguard Mechanism.</p> <p>Urged the need for sustained efforts to realize early an India -MERCOSUR-SACU FTA. In this regard, the leaders supported the proposal to hold a Trilateral Ministerial meeting in 2008.</p> <p>An intra-IBSA trade target of US\$ 15 billion by 2010.</p> <p>Highlighted the importance of implementing the principles adopted in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and emphasised that capacity and institution building is a key to global sustainable development.</p> <p>To address the problem of developing countries debt,</p> | <p>the highest political level. In this regard, they welcomed the proposal of a MERCOSUR-SACU-India trilateral ministerial meeting in order to promote high level discussions on the topic.</p> <p>Called upon the developed countries to fulfill their commitments in the global partnership on increased financial flows to developing countries, including increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of their GNI, and on transfer of technology and capacity building.</p> | <p>They expressed their concern over the excessive demands made on some developing countries without any indication of adequate additional concessions in favour of developing countries.</p> <p>Recalled, with satisfaction, the First Trilateral MERCOSUR-SACU-India Ministerial Meeting held in Geneva on November 30, 2009.</p> <p>Stressed the importance of promoting sustainable development and called for a comprehensive preparatory process, to ensure that the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 can adequately address existing implementation</p> | <p>WTO consistent policy space previously negotiated by developing countries. The Leaders urged the members of the WTO to reach an agreement on measures of interest to LDCs such as DFQF, Cotton, and services waiver and not to make it conditional to reaching an agreement on market access issues.</p> <p>The Leaders committed themselves to work together in relevant multilateral fora to enhance macro-economic policy coordination for sustainable recovery and continued growth. As members of the G20, IBSA Countries reaffirmed their support for the Group as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.</p> |
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| <p>Conformity Assessment. To create a concrete basis for the increase of trade flows between IBSA countries.</p> <p>Commitment to the expeditious establishment of the Working Group to focus on the modalities for the envisaged India-Mercosur-SACU Trilateral Free Trade Agreement (T-FTA) that can strongly contribute to a new scenario in international trade, suitable to their respective development goals.</p> <p>Achieving MDGs, in particular MDG8 to develop global partnership for development.</p> <p>Increasing the levels</p> | <p>increase the Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows and reduce the inequalities in the international trading system.</p> <p>Enhancing international efforts to develop innovative financial mechanisms to fight poverty and hunger.</p> <p>An integrated IBSA Social Development Strategy which will build on the best practices of the three countries for serving as a blue print for South-South Cooperation.</p> | <p>To explore new models of cooperation for development and the substantive role of innovative finance mechanisms, complementary to the ODA, in order to support the efforts made to the fulfillment of the MDGs, to the fight against hunger and poverty and to sustainable development.</p> <p>To promote mutually beneficial trends in South-South Cooperation through enhanced linkages such as trade, investment and technology transfer including trade agreements of bilateral or multilateral nature such as the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP)</p> <p>Reaffirmed their commitment to</p> | <p>deficits and emerging issues in sustainable development, with a view to further strengthening international cooperation in this field.</p> <p>Noted with appreciation the adoption of the “IBSA Social Development Strategies” and of the “Future of Agriculture Cooperation in IBSA”</p> | <p>The Leaders stressed the importance of sustaining long-term capital flows to developing countries to stimulate investment, especially in infrastructure and called upon Multilateral Development Banks and Regional Development Banks to mobilise more resources.</p> <p>Emphasised the importance of the G20 development agenda, with its focus on the contribution to sustainable growth in developing countries, especially in low income countries, and to continue towards mainstreaming it, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, food security and trade.</p> <p>The Leaders</p> |
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| | <p>of Official Development Assistance (ODA), supporting the levels of liberalisation of trade, and elimination, by the developed countries, of subsidies for products that are of interest to developing countries, essential in promoting development and fighting hunger and poverty.</p> <p>Donor countries to increase ODA targets and to mobilise new and additional financial resources, as well also foster the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies.</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding on Trilateral Cooperation in Agriculture and</p> | | <p>sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and called upon the international community to support and to vigorously enhance the implementation of the principles and goals in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in an effort to work towards a sustainable agenda.</p> <p>Welcomed the signing of the MoU on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment.</p> <p>Stepped up international collaboration to increase agricultural productivity and sharing the intellectual property of the research to address</p> | | <p>emphasised the need to increase policy coordination amongst G20 nations, with a view to avert a new recession and to promote a robust recovery in order to ensure strong, sustainable and balanced growth of the global economy in the medium term – based on carefully calibrated fiscal consolidation in countries with high debt levels and measures to strengthen domestic demand in countries with large surpluses.</p> <p>The Leaders stressed the importance of implementing the current international commitments of financial regulatory reform, with a view to improving oversight and supervision, towards a more resilient financial</p> |
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| | <p>Allied Fields, signed during the IBSA Summit, as an important instrument to promote socio-economic development and South-South cooperation.</p> | | <p>food security.</p> | <p>system. They also renewed their commitment to the timely implementation of the Basel III agreement.</p> <p>The Leaders emphasised the importance of a more stable and resilient International Monetary System and coherent management of capital flows. They highlighted the special responsibility of reserve currency issuers in the field, in the sense that their policies can have a disproportionate impact on global liquidity and capital flows.</p> <p>They stressed that there is no “one-size-fits-all” strategy for sustainable development and that the Rio+20 conference in 2012 should</p> |
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| | | | | | <p>reinvigorate political commitment towards the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda and work towards assisting developing countries through additional and new financing, technology transfer and capacity building in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication</p> <p>Agreed that Rio+20 should renew political commitment to accelerate the implementation of the sustainable development agenda as defined by the Rio Principles and taken forward through the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) in pursuit of global sustainable development.</p> |
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| <p>Disarmament and Non-proliferation</p> | <p>Systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner</p> <p>Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring continuous irreversible progress on both fronts.</p> <p>Welcomed in this regard the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.</p> | <p>Expressing concern over the lack of progress in the realisation of the to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, they emphasised that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring continuous, irreversible progress on both fronts.</p> <p>Further emphasised the systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner, and the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time to eliminate nuclear weapons, to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction.</p> | <p>Reiterated their commitment to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and expressed concern over the lack of progress in the realisation of this goal.</p> <p>They emphasised that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring continuous, irreversible progress on both fronts, and reaffirmed, in this regard, that the objective of non-proliferation would be best served by the systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner.</p> | <p>Reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner, and expressed concern over the lack of progress in the realisation of that goal, and reiterated that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes, requiring continuous irreversible progress on both fronts.</p> <p>Expressed support for an International Convention Prohibiting the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Nuclear Weapons, leading to their destruction.</p> | <p>Reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe, in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory, verifiable and irreversible manner.</p> <p>Brazil and South Africa welcomed India's engagement with, and interest in, participation in the relevant international multilateral export control regimes and utilisation of their guidelines</p> |
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| | | | <p>Emphasised the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time to eliminate 6 nuclear weapons, to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction.</p> <p>Discussed the threat posed by non-state actors or terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons or their related materials and technologies. They reaffirmed their commitment to contribute to multilateral efforts to counter such threats and promote co-operation in this</p> | | |
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| Peaceful use of nuclear energy | <p>Emphasised the need to ensure the supply of safe, sustainable and non-polluting sources of energy to meet the rising global demand for energy, particularly in developing countries.</p> <p>To explore approaches to cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) safeguards.</p> <p>Enhance International civilian nuclear cooperation, under appropriate IAEA safeguards, amongst countries committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation</p> | <p>Underlined the importance of ensuring the supply of safe, sustainable and non-polluting sources of energy to meet the rising global demand for energy, particularly in developing countries. In this context, they agreed to explore approaches to cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate IAEA safeguards.</p> <p>Enhance International civilian nuclear cooperation, under appropriate IAEA safeguards, amongst countries committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, through acceptable forward-looking approaches, consistent with their respective national and international obligations.</p> | <p>Underlined the importance of ensuring the supply of safe, sustainable and non-polluting sources of energy to meet the rising global demand for energy, particularly in developing countries.</p> <p>Enhanced international civilian nuclear co-operation, under appropriate IAEA safeguards, amongst countries committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, and could be enhanced through acceptable forward-looking approaches, consistent with their respective national and international obligations.</p> <p>In this context, they welcomed the</p> | ---- | ---- |

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| | objectives, through acceptable forward-looking approaches, consistent with their respective national and international obligations. | | consensus decision of the IAEA Board of Governors to approve the India Specific Safeguards Agreement and the decision by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to adjust its guidelines to enable full civil nuclear cooperation between India and the international community | | |
| Intellectual Property | Underscoring the importance of incorporating a development dimension in international discussions concerning intellectual property, they reaffirmed the need to reach a solution for the problem raised by the granting of intellectual property rights on biological resources and/or associated traditional knowledge, without | To work towards a trilateral initiative on cooperation in the field of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) concerning capacity building activities, human resource development and public awareness programmes. | Agreed on the need for establishing trilateral cooperation in the field of intellectual property rights with the aim of promoting a balanced international intellectual property regime and to make a meaningful contribution to the economic and social progress of developing countries, ensuring access to knowledge, health care and culture. Moreover, they agreed that the countries should hold | Called for the full implementation of the Development Agenda of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Warned against attempts at developing new international rules on enforcement of intellectual property rights outside the appropriate fora of WTO and WIPO, that may give free rein to abuses in the protection of rights, the building of barriers | Emphasised the need for an equitable and balanced international system of rules governing intellectual property, allowing among others, for the protection of indigenous knowledge systems against abuse and for preventing the misappropriation of genetic resources, and associated traditional knowledge. They called for the full implementation of the |

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| | <p>due compliance with relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and emphasised to amend the TRIPS Agreement by introducing a mandatory requirement for the disclosure of origin of biological resources and/or associated traditional knowledge used in inventions for which applications for intellectual property rights are filed.</p> <p>Establishing an informal trilateral consultative mechanism for the exchange of information to prevent cases of misappropriation of biological resources through the granting of erroneous patents or the registration of irregular trademarks</p> | | <p>consultations on a regular basis on the evolution of the international agenda.</p> <p>Stressed the importance of a timely and successful conclusion of the ongoing negotiations of a legally binding international regime on access to genetic resources and sharing of the benefits derived from their use and from associated traditional knowledge (Access Benefit Sharing - ABS). Recognising the role of IBSA Forum in the context of ABS negotiations, reaffirmed the urgent need for an adequate legal framework at the international level to prevent biopiracy, ensure that national rules and regulations on ABS are fully respected across</p> | <p>against free trade and undermining fundamental civil rights.</p> <p>Further expressed renewed concern about the continuous application of enforcement measures that allow seizures of generic medicines in transit to developing countries, in violation of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules</p> | <p>Development Agenda of the WIPO in all areas of its work.</p> <p>Warned against attempts at developing new international rules on enforcement of intellectual property rights outside the multilateral fora that may give free rein to systematic abuses in the protection of rights, the building of barriers against free trade and undermining fundamental civil rights.</p> |
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| | | | borders and recognize the value of biological resources and of traditional knowledge as an additional tool to promote sustainable development. | | |
| Human Rights | Common vision to reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the realisation and operationalisation of the Right to Development and the special protection of rights of vulnerable groups. | Developing the institutional framework of the Human Rights Council (HRC), including the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, based on effective international cooperation. Establishment of two additional Working Groups on “Human Settlement Development” | Reiterated their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and emphasised that the work of the HRC should be free from politicization, double standards and selectivity and should promote international cooperation. Underscored the importance of promoting cooperation on Human Rights with a view to exchanging information on national policies and initiatives, which could translate into dialogue and mutual benefit in the field of Human Rights | Attaching the highest priority to human rights issues and the importance of their close collaboration in the HRC, the leaders emphasized the need to continue to strengthen international human rights law, norms and standards, particularly in the area of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in accordance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination The Leaders welcomed the adoption of an | The Leaders welcomed the recently concluded Outcome of the review of the status, functioning and working methods of the United Nations Human Rights Council and in this regard reiterated their commitment to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. |

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| | | | promotion and protection. | IBSA proposal in the Human Rights Council related to the importance of access to medicine (A/HRC/RES/12/24). | |
| Defence Cooperation | ----- | Explore avenues of cooperation in the sector of defence for the common benefit of the three countries. | --- | --- | --- |
| Connectivity | Conclusion of the IBSA Maritime Transportation Agreement that will create the necessary framework for improving logistics, enhancing maritime skills base and fostering trilateral trade flows. | Improved air and maritime connectivity among IBSA countries for expanding trade, investment and tourism. | Welcomed the signing of the Five Year Action Plan for Maritime Transport, and Five Year Action Plan for Civil Aviation, | ---- | ---- |
| Tourism | --- | --- | Welcomed the signing of the Tripartite Agreement on Tourism | --- | --- |
| Terrorism | Condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestation. To expedite and conclude a comprehensive | Early adoption of a Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism (CCIT). International cooperation in combating terrorism should be | Reaffirming that terrorism presents a grave threat to international peace and security, the leaders strongly condemned terrorism | Condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the recent attacks in India that resulted in the loss of innocent lives, the | Reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and encouraged cooperation among |

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| | <p>convention on international terrorism.</p> <p>To undertake necessary measures to bring to justice the perpetrators, collaborators and sponsors of Mumbai attacks as well as other such acts of terrorism.</p> <p>Intensify measures to combat the scourge of terrorism.</p> | <p>conducted in conformity with the principles of the UN Charter, relevant UN Resolutions and International Conventions, and Human Rights.</p> | <p>in all its forms and manifestations, and called for an early conclusion of negotiations leading to expeditious adoption of the CCIT.</p> | <p>leaders emphasised the urgent need to finalise the CCIT and called upon all states to cooperate in resolving outstanding issues with the objective of an expeditious conclusion of negotiations and adoption of this Convention.</p> | <p>States and regional organisations in the fight against terrorism. In this regard they emphasised the urgent need to finalize the CCIT and called upon all UN member states to cooperate in resolving outstanding issues with the objective of an expeditious conclusion of negotiations and adoption of this Convention.</p> |
| Transnational Organised Crime | --- | --- | --- | --- | <p>Welcomed the adoption of the 2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons which will contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children, as well as enhance cooperation and better coordination of efforts in fighting trafficking in persons.</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>The Leaders called on Member States of IBSA to collaborate in their fight against the scourge of transnational organised crime, including cooperation in the area of extradition, mutual legal assistance and criminal justice.</p> <p>Invited Governments to take into consideration the Salvador Declaration on Comprehensive Strategies for Global Challenges: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Systems and Their Development in a Changing World when formulating legislation and policy directives, and to implement the principles contained therein, taking into account the economic, social, legal and</p> |
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| | | | | | cultural specificities of their respective States. |
| Climate Change | Reaffirmed that the principles in the Rio Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Action, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, should continue to guide multilateral negotiations on environmental issues | <p>All developed countries to take more ambitious and quantifiable GHG emission reduction targets in the post 2012 period under the Kyoto Protocol.</p> <p>Addressing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.</p> <p>Spur the Carbon market and significantly enhance the Clean Development Mechanism's contribution to sustainable development, financial flows and transfer of clean technologies to developing countries.</p> <p>Adequate, new and additional financing for the adaptation efforts of developing countries without diverting resources for development.</p> <p>Innovative modalities for the development, transfer and commercialization of technologies, including clean coal technologies, at affordable</p> | <p>Underscored the importance for urgent action on climate change in accordance with the provisions and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), especially the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and the critical priority of sustainable development for developing countries.</p> <p>Taking into account historical responsibilities, strive for an equitable burden sharing paradigm for equal sustainable development potential for all citizens of the</p> | <p>Reiterating the importance of a positive result for the current climate change negotiations at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the UNFCCC and the 6th Conference of the Parties, the leaders' stressed that the result should be reached in an inclusive and transparent manner, and should effectively address the challenge of climate change, in accordance with the principles of the UNFCCC, especially the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.</p> <p>Urged developed countries to take ambitious action to reduce their greenhouse gas</p> | <p>Called for an agreement on the 2nd commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol as well as the early operationalisation of all the institutions agreed to at COP16/CMP6 in Cancun last year, the Adaptation Committee; the Technology Executive Committee, the Technology Centre and Network; the Standing Committee on Finance and the Green Climate Fund, which must provide significant means of implementation for immediate action to tackle climate change.</p> <p>An appropriate assessment of the Green Climate Fund should be undertaken during COP17/CMP7,</p> |

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| | | <p>costs to developing countries.</p> <p>Establishment of two additional Working Groups on “Environment and Climate Change” .</p> | <p>world.</p> <p>Quantified time bound targets and delivery of ambitious and absolute greenhouse gas emissions reductions under the Kyoto Protocol by the developed countries. Additionally, the developed countries need to promote sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles and financing to support both mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.</p> <p>Commitment to take nationally appropriate actions to address climate change through financing, technology and capacity building support. Further, called upon the international community to actively promote technology</p> | <p>emissions, and to provide adequate international financing and transfer of technology to support the efforts of developing countries to mitigate and adapt the impacts of climate change.</p> | <p>to be held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011, in order to ensure its adequate structure, with a view to timely disbursements to developing countries.</p> |
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| | | | <p>innovation and development and its transfer and deployment in developing countries.</p> <p>Welcomed signing of an MoU on Environment.</p> | | |
| Health | <p>Reduce trade barriers to facilitate access to new affordable quality medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and technology aimed at preventing and controlling infectious diseases, and underscored that the flexibilities contained in the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, recognised by the Doha Ministerial Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, should be fully used to protect public health.</p> | <p>An early implementation of the Action Plan in the sector of Health</p> | --- | --- | <p>Expressing their conviction that universal access to healthcare and affordable medicines is an indispensable step in the fight against communicable and non communicable diseases, the Leaders recognized that the effective impact of intellectual property on health, access to drugs and prices can best be tackled by enabling developing nations to scale up production of generic medicines through the full use of the flexibilities provided by the TRIPS agreement, in</p> |

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| | <p>Developed an IBSA Implementation Plan on Health focusing on public health laboratories, health surveillance, traditional medicine and sanitary control regulation.</p> <p>To further enhancing trilateral cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and to explore the possibilities of concluding a trilateral instrument for collaboration among all three countries for research and development of AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis diagnostic tools, drugs and vaccines</p> | | | | <p>accordance with the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, and, with the support of the World Health Organisation (WHO).</p> |
| Education | | Holding of workshops and seminars, exchange of | | | |

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| | --- | information, and joint projects. Cooperation among the diplomatic institutes of IBSA countries. | ---- | --- | --- |
| Science and Technology | Scientific and technological cooperation between research and development institutions in the three countries, in areas such as health, biotechnology, nanosciences and oceanography | Immediate action to start implementation of joint research projects. They welcomed the creation of a seed fund of US\$ 1 million in each country for collaborative activities in S&T. Promote and enhance cooperation among the IBSA partners in the ICT infrastructure development | --- | The Leaders decided to the early development of satellites in the areas of space weather, climate and earth observation. These satellites will address common challenges in climate studies, agriculture and food security. The IBSA micro satellites aim to promote and strengthen space programs amongst the three countries. | Brazil and South Africa welcomed India's decision conveyed at the Working Group on Science and Technology meeting that India will host the IBSA Satellite Technical Meeting In Bengaluru to discuss (i) modalities of cooperation in space weather, earth observation and micro satellite; and (ii) translating the IBSA Satellite concept into action. |
| Energy | Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Biofuels, with the decision to create a Trilateral Task Force on Biofuels to work on concrete areas of | Development and deployment of renewables, biofuels and biomass, and advanced clean technologies. Establishment of joint projects and collaboration for the increased usage of alternative | To collaborate in diverse policy and technology areas to strengthen energy security in the three countries and to work towards the diversification of | Welcomed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology and Solar Energy. | The Leaders acknowledged that each State has a right to define its national energy policy in accordance with its national circumstances and requirements and |

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| | <p>common Interest.</p> <p>Initiative launched by Brazil - the Biofuels Forum - to articulate and consolidate common objectives including the transformation of bioethanol into an energy commodity.</p> | <p>sources of energy such as biofuels, synthetic fuels, wind and solar energy to help achieve the objective of energy security which can bring significant reduction in GHG emissions.</p> | <p>energy baskets for a larger share of renewable, alternate and clean energy. Towards this IBSA will deepen regular exchanges, to further knowledge and knowhow in the areas of biofuels, nuclear, hydro, wind and solar energy.</p> <p>The leaders recognised the need of a concerted effort for jointly developing renewable energy technologies with the developed countries for the overall benefit of the mankind. Taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, they also called upon the developed countries to consider innovative modalities in the field of intellectual property so as to facilitate the</p> | <p>its relevant international obligations, and also recognised that a diverse portfolio of energy sources will be needed in future to sustain energy and electricity resources in all regions of the world.</p> <p>They recognised that renewable energy, as well as nuclear power play an important role in the energy mix of countries and also contributes to mitigate the risk of global climate change.</p> <p>The Leaders remain convinced of the importance of encouraging joint research and studies to promote cooperation and information exchange in the field of development of sustainable and alternative energy.</p> |
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| | | | access to such technologies by developing countries. | | |
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| Internet Governance | Signing of an IBSA Framework of Cooperation on Information Society, which provides the basis for future trilateral work aiming at reducing the digital divide in their societies enhance close trilateral cooperation and capacity building between the three countries in the areas of digital inclusion, ICTs for development, as well as E-government and governance. | ---- | ---- | Reaffirmed their commitment to working together towards a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, and to coordinate positions for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) follow-up mechanisms, as well as in the other fora and organizations related to the Information Society and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Highlighted the importance of building a wide political concertation at international level for making the global internet governance regime as multilateral, democratic and | Reaffirmed their commitment to working together towards a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and their agreement to continue to coordinate positions for the WSIS follow-up mechanisms, as well as in the other fora and organizations related to the ICTs. Recommended the establishment of an IBSA Internet Governance and Development Observatory that should be tasked to monitor developments on global Internet Governance and provide regular updates and analyses from the perspective of developing countries. |

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| | | | | transparent as provided by the WSIS. | |
| IBSA Facility Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger | <p>Emphasised the fact that the IBSA Facility Fund, established in 2004, constitutes a pioneer and unique initiative of South-South cooperation.</p> <p>They underscored that the successful implementation of the initial projects (Guinea-Bissau and Haiti), together with increased resources mobilization, are essential elements for the consolidation of the IBSA Trust Fund as a viable and efficient mechanism for South-South cooperation.</p> | Explore more effective mechanism for the utilisation of the Fund. | Reiterated that the Fund constitutes a pioneer and unique initiative to enhance South-South Cooperation for the benefit of the neediest of nations of the South. The leaders reviewed the modalities of the disbursement of IBSA Trust Fund as well as the criteria for Project proposals and concurred with the new programme guidelines. In this context, the leaders welcomed with satisfaction the projects in Burundi, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Laos and Palestine. | Appreciating that people and authorities of Haiti, Palestine, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi and Cambodia are benefiting from projects being undertaken under the IBSA Facility Fund. They reiterated the continued commitment of India, Brazil and South Africa to each contribute with at least US\$ 1 million per year to the Fund. | <p>Highlighted the importance of the IBSA Fund as an instrument to alleviate poverty and hunger and a useful vehicle for meaningful South-South cooperation.</p> <p>The Leaders reiterated their commitment to the various new projects that have been approved and are being implemented under auspices of the IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Trust Fund), i.e. Palestine, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vietnam, Sudan and South Sudan.</p> |
| Gender | --- | Supported the full launch of Women's Forum for strengthening the participation and contribution of women to the overall | Called on the international community to reaffirm its commitment to gender parity and to | Stressed the importance of empowering women, increasing their participation in | The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the |

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| | | development of IBSA, ensure gender equality and women's rights | <p>identify concrete and action-oriented steps to advance the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly of 2005.</p> <p>Welcomed the signing of the MoU on Women's Development and Gender Equality Programmes</p> | <p>economic activities and addressing the negative impact of the international financial crisis on their situation.</p> <p>They instructed all governments to pay due attention to the recommendations provided by the IBSA Women's Forum.</p> <p>Reiterated their support for the full implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (2000) and of formulating and implementing appropriate policies and programs in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action.</p> | <p>Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.</p> <p>Called for adequate funding of the budget of UN-Women to enable it to promptly and effectively plan and carry out its mandate.</p> |
| AU/NEPAD | | Reiterated their firm belief on New Partnership for Africa's | Reiterated their firm support to the New | The Leaders welcomed the 2010 decision of | The Leaders welcomed the fact that the full |

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| | --- | <p>Development (NEPAD) a key framework for socio-economic development in Africa, and Pan-African Infrastructure Development Fund will, as it evolves, help accelerate Africa's growth and development to meet the objectives as set out in the NEPAD.</p> | <p>Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the key African Union (AU) socio-economic programme for Africa, and their continued support of the programme for infrastructural development in Africa. Further cooperation on NEPAD's identified priority sectors as ICT, energy, water and sanitation and transport.</p> | <p>the AU Assembly to further integrate the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into the AU structures and the re-naming of the NEPAD Secretariat to the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).</p> <p>They further took note that the NPCA's mandate now includes the coordination and monitoring of programmes and projects of the AU – underlined by the AU Assembly and the AU Executive Council - amongst the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states.</p> <p>Recognised that further integration of NEPAD as well as the augmented mandate of the NPCA will promote a more</p> | <p>integration of the NEPAD Agency into the structures of the AU has been completed, and that Africa's most important partners are increasingly aligning their programmatic support as well as their projects with NEPAD principles and policies.</p> <p>They welcomed the successful conclusion of the 2nd India-Africa Forum Summit in Addis Ababa in May 2011.</p> |
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| | | | | holistic and coordinated approach to infrastructural development and in the growth and development of Africa, which will benefit the attainment of NEPAD's identified priorities in such sectors as ICT, energy, water and sanitation and transport. | |
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Source: Compiled by the author from the five IBSA Heads of the State Summit Declarations available @ <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/about-ibsa/ibsa-summits>

Challenges

It is often argued that the main challenge confronting the IBSA Trilateral Forum is to maintain its relevance in the wake of the emergence of similar groupings, such as the BRICS.^{xix} In order to overcome this challenge, and keep its relevance, the member states should ensure the following:

1. Work collectively towards ensuring regularity in meetings, both at the Heads of State and Government level as well as Ministerial level. Such regularity is important to maintain the distinctiveness of the forum vis-à-vis other groupings.
2. While continuing to engage with other groupings, the member-states of IBSA should work towards strengthening the trilateral forum by coordinating on issues of global importance, particularly on issues like global governance reform, security and development cooperation.
3. Work collectively towards achieving the mandate of the forum i.e. South-South Cooperation by enhancing their commitments to and expediting the implementation of the commitments at different summits, and build onto its many achievements, particularly the MERCOSUR-SACU-India Trilateral FTA.
4. Function as a joint lobby group in other groupings of which they are members, including BRICS, G20 etc.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that IBSA summits have not been held for more than six years at a stretch, the IBSA Trilateral Forum cannot be rendered obsolete. Progress has been made both in terms of commitments and its implementation. Progress can be seen in the effective implementation of the IBSA Fund in both developing and least developing countries and the launch of the IBSA Fellowship Programme which illustrates the success of the IBSA Trilateral Forum.

As is evident, the leaders' of the IBSA Trilateral Forum have collectively worked in different sectors over the years. The three countries in the IBSA Forum, with shared political, economic and development history, bring together wide range of complementary strengths and capabilities which needs to be effectively harnessed for mutual benefit. Recognising the importance and relevance of the IBSA Forum, Minister of State for External Affairs, India, Gen. (Dr.) V K Singh (Retd.), remarked at the 8th Ministerial Meeting, "*IBSA Forum is a unique platform for consultation, coordination and cooperation among the three democratic traditions from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Though the geographical distances separate our three countries, there is much convergence in our world views on sustainable development, clean and healthy living, multilateral trading system, Doha Development Agenda, disarmament and non-proliferation*".^{xx}

South-South Cooperation is a key element of the IBSA Forum for promoting economic and social development. In this context, the IBSA Dialogue Forum provides an invaluable framework to further trilateral cooperation among the three countries as well as promote the interests of the developing countries, thus contributing to the strengthening and deepening of South-South Cooperation. As a forum created for South-South cooperation, each member should work towards the early resumption of the summit level meetings and ensure more regularity. The 8th Ministerial Meeting has set the groundwork for IBSA events and to reconvene the Summit of the Head of the States and Governments in India in 2018. The future of IBSA will depend on how the IBSA countries fully capitalise this opportunity to build on the successes achieved to date.

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Disclaimer: Views expressed are of author and do not reflect the views of the Council.

End Notes

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ⁱⁱⁱ IBSA, “1st IBSA Summit Meeting Joint Declaration”, September 13, 2006, http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/images/stories/documents/declarations/1st_summit_declaration.pdf (accessed on November 20, 2017)

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^{xviii} IBSA, “INDIA-BRAZIL-SOUTH AFRICA DIALOGUE FORUM FOURTH SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT BRASÍLIA DECLARATION”, April 15, 2010, <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/images/stories/documents/declarations/Final%20Summit%20Declaration%20-%204th%20IBSA%20Summit%202010.pdf> (accessed on November 20, 2017)

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