

The Prospective of IBSA in the Changing International Scenario

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INTRODUCTION

IBSA Forum is an open-ended forum working as an instrument for preceding the political and economic issues of developing countries within itself and with the developed countries. IBSA Forum is building on the common colonial backgrounds, the common cultural and ethnic lineages, relatively large and diversified economies, structural problems of poverty & inequalities and the socialistic background of the present political dispensations in all the three countries. Brazil has the largest black population outside the African continent and second largest in the world after Nigeria. India's tied strongly to South Africa in anti-apartheid struggle. Both are one of the closest neighbours across Indian Ocean. Brazil is one of the closest neighbours of South Africa west of Atlantic. IBSA Forum countries together hold immense assurance- a market of 1.2 billion people, a US \$ 1.2 trillion domestic market, and foreign trade of US \$ 300 billion. All three countries are playing their role vehemently and it gives an impression that as IBSA, they are having vast potential to establish rule-based market system in international economy. Along with it, the common problems existing in IBSA member states is the poverty and inequality, which can be curbed through safeguard of agricultural and industrial interests on priority. The electoral result and change of government in India (2004) and Brazil (2002) and second term of Thabo Mbeki (2004) have revealed the popular disenchantment with the consequences of liberalization policies. This result mandates their governments to give priority to the issue of equity and distributive justice. Brazil has marked social issues as foreign policy determinants based on NAM principles. It not only commands the geo-politics but geo-economics too of South Cone especially; and is heading the current round of negotiations between Mercosur and the EU and Mercosur and Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). The foreign policy priority of India is strengthening brotherhood relation in Asia region and endorsed it through SAARC, BIMSTEC, Indo-Bangladesh road and air route, Indo-Pakistan transportation policy (through air, railway and road route), improving relations with China and West Asia, which has emerged India's image as Third World Leader. Ian Taylor writes, "The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) offers a platform to South Africa to lead Africa out of its present under-development and political chaos--- continentally promoting the agenda of economic liberalization while keeping control of the African geo-politics." South Africa is the leading destination for India's export accounted to 14% of total exports to Africa during 2003-04. As regards India's total imports from Africa, South

Africa dominates with a significant share of 59.2% during 2003-04. The cooperation among IBSA states is moving from bilateral to trilateral agreements in specific areas of economy, technology, defence, space and civilian nuclear energy. Today, Brazil in Mercosur, South Africa in SACU and broadly in SADC and India in SAARC and broadly in BIMESTEC is facilitating other developing countries on economic cum trade issues. The functional aspect of IBSA exists in Science and Technology, Agriculture, Energy, Defence, Pharmaceuticals and Tourism. The third world countries projects are started and Guinea Bissau as UNDP project has been granted under the IBSA. The UN proposed projects on "IT in Garbage collection and its recycling" is another major project lay in pipe line under IBSA.

Major IBSA Potential

1. IBSA will work within the UN processes in New York, towards the successful conclusion of the Millennium Review Summit scheduled to take place from 14 to 16 September 2005.

2. IBSA reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of developing countries and fight against Underdevelopment, hunger and poverty. India recently gave \$1.5 billion credit to help Africa fight against HIV-AIDS.

3. IBSA strengthen the political will of the UN membership to maintain the momentum of the 2000 Millennium Summit, in order to translate commitments into concrete action, in particular, in the areas of development and poverty eradication.

4. IBSA focuses on Asia, Africa and Latin America would need to be included as permanent members on the Security Council. IBSA member countries agreed to exchange information and work towards this common purpose in the coming months.

5. IBSA intensifies co-operation in areas of mutual interest in the coming 6th WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005. This co-operation, aims at Doha Development Agenda and to enhance trade opportunities under an open, fair, equitable and transparent rules-based multilateral trading system. There is a possibility to bolster Southern influence on economic and security concerns in the WTO.

6. IBSA reaffirmed the Rio Declaration, particularly Agenda 21, and would continue its efforts to mobilize new and additional financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies within an agreed time-frame in order to implement the outcomes of these conferences. It will strengthen co-operation and coordination, with an emphasis on multilateral negotiations and in fostering activities related to South-South Cooperation.

7. IBSA supports the socio-economic development programme of the African Union (AU) and committed the IBSA partnership to seeking practical and concrete measures to be pursued in support of the implementation of NEPAD. IBSA explores the opportunities in the promotion of trade, investment, science and technology exchanges, and in the fields of energy, ICT, agriculture, bio-technology, health, tourism and education in support of the African agenda.

8. IBSA committed to devise to build the multilateral financial institutions genuinely open to participation by, and fully accountable to, the entire global constituency.

9. IBSA supported the UNSC resolution to combat terrorism and emphasized the need for

concerted and coordinated action by the international community, with the ultimate objective of eradicating terrorism in all its forms and manifestation. IBSA decided to initiate trilateral cooperation in various sectors such as Agriculture, Health, Energy, Science and Technology, Information and Communication Technology, and Culture. The Forum strengthens its Agriculture policy and started trade consultation process with G-20 including the convergence of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and/or Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and on WTO-related issues. IBSA forms a closer partnership between IBSA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the implementation of the Agriculture and Livestock Development project in Guinea Bissau.

10. IBSA concluded PTA between Mercosur-SACU and Mercosur-India and discussions are going on to sign an agreement between India and SACU. A study was circulated on "The Potential for Greater Trade between South Africa, India and Brazil" and the Member States undertook to conduct IBSA seminars on trade and investment in their respective countries as well as in key developed markets.

Major IBSA Promise

11. IBSA member countries reaffirmed their determination in Cape Town on 10 and 11 March 2005 to play a constructive role in international affairs to maintain friendly relations with all security concerns and emphasized that development was an indispensable foundation for a new collective security system. The Forum commits to Millennium Development Goals as a core strategy in the international fight against underdevelopment, hunger and poverty. South-South cooperation was an essential and fundamental component of international cooperation for development, especially in terms of global, regional and country-level efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

12. The Forum potential and cohesion are evident. South Africa's trade with India and Brazil has grown 1,334% and 268% respectively during the past decade. The trade between Brazil and India has grown 450% over the same period. IBSA explores possible areas of mutual cooperation such as the exchange of personnel, training, opportunities, the exchange of experiences in peacekeeping operations and Defence Industry co-operation. The above possible areas of mutual cooperation will be considered during the Ministerial meeting. Matters relating to the preparations for the proposed Defence Industry and Technology Seminar were also discussed.

13. IBSA expressed their support for the creation of an Asian-African Business Summit which would focus on exploring business opportunities, promoting trade and investment and identifying measures to strengthen the African private sector. They undertook to investigate ways to facilitate closer cooperation with South America. IBSA welcomed the efforts towards integration in the Latin America and Caribbean region and recognized the creation of the South American Community of Nations (CASA).

14. New Asian- African Strategies partnership (NAASP) will place emphasis on the promotion of trade and the development of infrastructure and transport sectors between

African and Asian countries.

15. IBSA enhances co-operation in the tourism sector in order to foster people-to-people contact under Culture programme and examine the possibility of visa waiver or the issuing of visas (as in case of India-Mauritius and India – Singapore) on arrival for IBSA nationals. To promote Culture, IBSA agreed to commence their collaboration by organizing music and dance festival in Brazil in November 2005, a meeting in India on the audiovisual sector in 2005 and a conference in South Africa on indigenous knowledge systems at the beginning of 2006.

16. IBSA discussed the progress made towards the finalization of a trilateral agreement on Civil Aviation and Maritime Transport Agreement. MEA sources affirmed that the copy of agreement may come any time