

EMERGING POWER EQUATIONS

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Voices of the South on Globalization is a monthly newsletter intended to inspire a meaningful North-South Dialogue by raising awareness for global interdependences and by offering a forum for voices from the South in the globalization debate. Each edition will present short analyses or commentaries from a Southern perspective on one particular issue of the globalization process. Voices of the South on Globalization is published by IPS Europe with financial support from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

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Global Governance That Inspires and Unites

Two acronyms in the alphabet soup of world affairs received heightened attention in mid-April when IBSA and BRIC met in Brasilia to review past performance, assess present needs, and work out their plans for the future.

Both meetings were scheduled to take place at the summit level. Although nature intervened to some extent, when an earthquake in China compelled President Hu Tinjao to cut short his BRIC engagement and rush back home, both meetings provided yet another reminder to the established economic and political order that new forms of cooperation and collaboration among nations have emerged and are growing. Where that will eventually take the peoples of the countries involved is yet to be seen.

IBSA and BRIC differ in membership, structure, and objectives. Both, however, appear to be united in their commitment to core principles, and in their optimism about the effectiveness and impact of their efforts.

The India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) was formed in 2003, “to contribute to the construction of a new international architecture, to bring their voices together on global issues and to deepen their ties in various areas. IBSA also opens itself to concrete projects of cooperation and partnership with less developed countries.”

IBSA sees itself as “an instrument for connecting India, Brazil and South Africa at all levels, aiming not only to increase these countries projection on the international scene but to strengthen the relations among themselves.”

In addition to regular consultations among heads of state and government, foreign ministers meet periodically, and working groups involving a variety of players, including academics, businessmen, journalists, and parliamentarians, seek opportunities for identifying programs of common interest and working on practical forms of collaboration.

As well, IBSA has established a fund for alleviating poverty and hunger to which each member country contributes \$1million a year.

BRIC, as the acronym suggests, brings together Brazil, Russia, India, and China in a consultative group that focuses much of its attention on economic issues. The current international affairs legend is that the acronym was coined by the authors of a Goldman Sachs report.

The Goldman Sachs report raised the possibility that the economies of these four countries would together outpace those of the existing “top tier” rich countries by 2050. Given the current discomfiture of Goldman Sachs, speculation about that parentage might not be particularly popular in BRIC countries. Whoever coined the term, the four-member group has grown increasingly articulate on a range of economic, social, and trade issues.

Although IBSA has three members to BRIC’s four, the IBSA summit in Brasilia had a longer final communiqué: 45 pages as compared with BRIC’s six.

Broadly speaking, both communiqués attempted to break out of the conventional wisdom, and to seek ways in which international institutions and practices could be made to serve the need of the world’s people and not only those seated atop the commanding heights of global governance or economic power.

There were several common features in the final documents, including support for sustainable development, a plea for reform of the UN to make it more effective and representative, and a plea as well for timely re-casting of the structure of Bretton Woods institutions to eliminate their “legitimacy deficits” and increase their effectiveness. *(continued on page 6)*

South-South Cooperation or Trilateral Diplomacy?

The two important events for the 'Global South' – the India-Brazil-SouthAfrica (IBSA) and the Brazil-Russia-India-China (BRIC) summits – will have great resonance for the future shape of South-South cooperation, says Rathin Roy, director of the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), based in Brasilia.

IPC-IG is a joint project between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Brazil to promote South-South Cooperation on applied poverty research. It specialises in analyzing poverty and inequality and offering research based policy recommendations on how to reduce them.

IPC-IG, which is directly linked to the Poverty Group of the Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP and the Government of Brazil, has been closely involved in a number of the activities associated with the two summits on April 15-16, 2010, especially the organisation of the 'Academic Forum: A Policy Dialogue' for the IBSA gathering.

Roy derives his optimism from the fact that the first decade of the 21st century has been marked by the intersection of three debates that previously had been conducted in separate domains with limited interaction.

Traditionally, the debate on global economic governance has been situated in the G-8 and in discussions associated with the governance of the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), says Roy.

The debate on development cooperation has largely been conducted from the perspective of donors, and has mostly been about aid, whether for or against. Foreign policy strategies have been viewed principally from the perspective of national strategic interests and, apart from specific initiatives rooted in the history of the Cold War, have been typically bilateral in scope and nature, other than for past and present superpowers.

The rapid increase in the number of emerging economies as global players – leading to a significant re-examination of the fundamental assumptions regarding voice, domain and the agency of global economic governance – is closely related to their greater involvement in development cooperation.

This is rooted in a deep historical engagement with the global South and is based on political solidarity with other developing nations. It is now apparent that foreign policy strategies will have to take account of the growing role of the emerging economies in shaping the future architecture of global economic governance and development cooperation.

"For that reason the IBSA and BRIC summits are front-page news in capitals across the world," states Roy in an introduction to 'South-South Cooperation: The Same Old Game or a New Paradigm?' of 'Poverty in Focus', published to coincide with the two summits.

"The neat division between bilateral, regional and global foreign policy strategies has become more diffuse. There is a fork in the road," writes Roy and asks: "Will the rise of the emerging economies portend just a broadening of the 'great game', the only result being a little more elbow room for developing countries in their engagement with the G-20 economies? Or will the global South seize this opportunity to forge a new and more inclusive paradigm that secures faster and more

sustainable development for all citizens?"

The articles in this issue of Poverty in Focus address different dimensions of this challenge. South-South cooperation has a specific history rooted in the "making of the Third World". Will the opportunities of the moment translate into better voice for and more inclusive cooperation with least developed countries? Can we look forward to exciting paradigm shifts in the discourses on global trade, aid, development cooperation and the rhetoric of best practice?

Will emergent regional and global plurilateral groupings afford new avenues for effective development cooperation? What does South-South cooperation look like from the perspective of the political economy of Sierra Leone, emerging from conflict and making heroic advances against tremendous odds, as it establishes institutions for governance and socioeconomic development?

In a chapter on IBSA, Dr. Daniel Fledes, a senior researcher at the GIGA Institute of Latin American Studies, Hamburg, takes a rather critical look at the trilateral body and asks whether IBSA will lead to South-South cooperation or "trilateral diplomacy in world affairs"?

IBSA was launched in June 2003 in Brasilia by the three countries' foreign ministers after informal talks during the G-8 meeting in Evian that same year. In September 2003, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Presidents Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and Thabo Mbeki founded the G-3 during the 58th UN General Assembly.

They contributed crucially to the upset at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting in Cancun by pressing for fundamental changes to the developed world's agricultural subsidies regimes. Together, the IBSA countries also lobbied for reform of the United Nations to provide a stronger role to developing countries, which comprise the majority of UN member states.

IBSA's functional leadership in WTO negotiations and the UN reform debate offers a countervailing force to the current hierarchy of the global order. India, Brazil and South Africa use "voice opportunities" provided by institutions such as the UN, the WTO and G-8 Summits to undermine the established great powers' policies in the short term.

In the long term, IBSA's soft balancing strategy is geared to the formation of a multipolar system based on the rule of international law. The three countries want to become power poles of that prospective multipolar world.

Generally, the coalition of Southern powers supports the process of international organisation, a conduct that is usually ascribed to middle powers, says Fledes. "But IBSA's global justice discourse is doubtful, since Brazil and India have been striving (with Germany and Japan) for permanent membership of the UN Security Council," he adds.

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IBSA - Closer Social Connections, Not Just Govt. Ties

The IBSA Fund, which finances anti-poverty projects in the most vulnerable countries, is an example of the spirit in which India, Brazil and South Africa wish to build their partnership, their leaders say.

The fund was set up in 2004, one year after the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum was created, with annual contributions of one million dollars from each member. It currently supports reconstruction in Haiti after the January earthquake, agriculture in Guinea-Bissau, and projects in other African and Asian countries like Burundi and Cambodia.

Resources are limited and information is scanty about the fund, and about IBSA in general. Journalists tend to focus more on the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) group, because of the power these countries have in global economics and politics when they join forces.

IBSA is a "unique structure which focuses on individuals in civil society," Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at the IBSA Summit in the Brazilian capital.

Six forums were held in parallel, bringing together women, researchers, journalists, parliamentarians, local governments and small businesses, indicating that this is "a project that belongs to our societies," said Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the Summit's host.

Bottom-up development and horizontal South-South cooperation have a significance that goes beyond the three countries because they are constructing new paradigms, according to Rathan Roy, head of the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), created by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Brazilian government.

Working with governments and business leaders, IBSA has made progress in terms of political cooperation and negotiations or agreements on trade preferences with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), of which Brazil is a member, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), headed by South Africa, and India.

However, journalists have failed to keep up with this process and with the economic and geopolitical changes taking place in the world today that are bringing about a shift in power relations, according to reporters invited to the IBSA Editors Forum Wednesday, organised by the Inter Press Service (IPS) news agency and supported by the Brazilian Foreign Ministry and the World Bank.

In order to bridge this gap, some 20 participants from Brazil, India and South Africa proposed that the IBSA Summit add a working group on communication to the 16 existing ones, create a web site for information about IBSA, and establish a programme to wake journalists up to these new developments.

IPS Director General Mario Lubetkin delivered the report from the Editors Forum, accompanied by Carlos Tiburcio, a special adviser to President Lula. IBSA is "the champion of South-South cooperation" and its members have developed "fascinating programmes" that deserve wider dissemination, said Yiping Zhou, head of the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, at the Editors Forum. The most frequently cited programmes at the IBSA Summit and its forums were Brazil's programme of family subsidies (Bolsa Familia), assisting 11 million

poor families, India's Rural Employment Guarantee scheme which benefited 34 million people in 2009, and South African programmes of employment in public works and social services.

"Our countries should not continue to receive news about each other via New York or London," but directly, said the Brazilian ambassador to South Africa, José Vicente Pimentel, at the Editors Forum, where Brazil's deputy minister for communication, Ottoni Fernandes, proposed cooperation between public television broadcasters across IBSA.

The Indian ambassador to Brazil, B.S. Prakash, highlighted the partnership between three great multicultural and multiethnic democracies that share common values, and acknowledged that the soap opera "Caminho das Índias" (India - A Love Story) produced last year by TV Globo "did more than 20 ambassadors could" to bring knowledge of India to the Brazilian people, although to a certain extent it fell into stereotypes.

"I was very pleased to have awoken curiosity among Brazilians about India and its culture," said Gloria Perez, the author of the soap, in a message to the editors.

Makhtar Diop, World Bank country director for Brazil, reported that the developing South now has greater weight within the institution, where reforms will increase representation, giving more countries and social sectors a voice, as well as increasing transparency and "making its documents public." The press plays an important role in this process, he said.

There were a large number of forums surrounding the IBSA Summit, which marked the conclusion of the labours of the 16 working groups covering areas like agriculture, defence, social development, climate change and tourism.

The IBSA Women's Forum called for new mechanisms and more effective enforcement of international treaties combating violence and discrimination against women and girls. It also launched a book, "Elaborating an Inclusive Macroeconomic Structure: a South-South Feminist Approach", the result of a 2008 seminar with representatives from all three countries.

The Academic Forum, organised by IPC-IG, concluded that the "capability and will" exist for joint research on key issues for fighting poverty and exclusion within IBSA, and expressed particular concern about production of essential medicines, and about neglected diseases.

The final declaration of the IBSA Summit is a lengthy 45-point document that addresses a range of issues, from United Nations reform to climate change, empowerment of women and the launch of two satellites, for earth observation and weather studies, to be jointly built by IBSA countries.

Agricultural cooperation is the subject of a specific document containing scenario predictions for 2030 and cooperation and exchange programmes. - **Mario Osava** ☑



BRIC Summit Communiqué - April 15

We, the leaders of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China, met in Brasilia on 15 April 2010 to discuss major issues of the international agenda as well as concrete steps to move forward the cooperation and coordination within BRIC.

We have agreed on the following:

Common Vision and Global Governance

1. We share the perception that the world is undergoing major and swift changes that highlight the need for corresponding transformations in global governance in all relevant areas.

2. We underline our support for a multipolar, equitable and democratic world order, based on international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all States.

3. We stress the central role played by the G-20 in combating the crisis through unprecedented levels of coordinated action. We welcome the fact that the G-20 was confirmed as the premier forum for international economic coordination and cooperation of all its member states. Compared to previous arrangements, the G-20 is broader, more inclusive, diverse, representative and effective. We call upon all its member states to undertake further efforts to implement jointly the decisions adopted at the three G-20 Summits.

We advocate the need for the G-20 to be proactive and formulate a coherent strategy for the post-crisis period. We stand ready to make a joint contribution to this effort.

4. We express our strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with the United Nations playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats. In this respect, we reaffirm the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN, with a view to making it more effective, efficient and representative, so that it can deal with today's global challenges more effectively. We reiterate the importance we attach to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs, and understand and support their aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations.

5. We believe the deepened and broadened dialogue and cooperation of the BRIC countries is conducive not only to serving common interests of emerging market economies and developing countries, but also to building a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity. We have agreed upon steps to promote dialogue and cooperation among our countries in an incremental, proactive, pragmatic, open and transparent way.

International Economic and Financial Issues.

6. The world economic situation has improved since our first meeting in June 2009, in Ekaterinburg. We welcome the resumption of economic growth, in which emerging market economies are playing a very important role. However, we recognize that the foundation of world economic recovery is not yet solid, with uncertainties remaining. We call upon all states to strengthen macroeconomic cooperation, jointly secure world economic recovery and achieve a strong, sustainable and balanced growth. We reiterate our determination to make positive efforts in maintaining domestic economic recovery and promoting development in our own countries and worldwide.

7. We underline the importance of maintaining relative stability of major reserve currencies and sustainability of fiscal policies

in order to achieve a strong, long-term balanced economic growth.

8. We are convinced that emerging market economies and developing countries have the potential to play an even larger and active role as engines of economic growth and prosperity, while at the same time commit to work together with other countries towards reducing imbalances in global economic development and fostering social inclusion.

9. G-20 members, with a significant contribution from BRIC countries, have greatly increased resources available to the IMF. We support the increase of capital, under the principle of fair burden-sharing, of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and of the International Finance Corporation, in addition to more robust, flexible and agile client-driven support for developing economies from multilateral development banks.

10. Despite promising positive signs, much remains to be done. We believe that the world needs today a reformed and more stable financial architecture that will make the global economy less prone and more resilient to future crises, and that there is a greater need for a more stable, predictable and diversified international monetary system.

11. We will strive to achieve an ambitious conclusion to the ongoing and long overdue reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions. The IMF and the World Bank urgently need to address their legitimacy deficits. Reforming these institutions' governance structures requires first and foremost a substantial shift in voting power in favor of emerging market economies and developing countries to bring their participation in decision making in line with their relative weight in the world economy. We call for the voting power reform of the World Bank to be fulfilled in the upcoming Spring Meetings, and expect the quota reform of the IMF to be concluded by the G-20 Summit in November this year. We do also agree on the need for an open and merit based selection method, irrespective of nationality, for the heading positions of the IMF and the World Bank. Moreover, staff of these institutions needs to better reflect the diversity of their membership. There is a special need to increase participation of developing countries. The international community must deliver a result worthy of the expectations we all share for these institutions within the agreed timeframe or run the risk of seeing them fade into obsolescence. ☑



South-South Cooperation or Trilateral Diplomacy?

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Flemes argues that India and Brazil invited South Africa to join the group but the country had to abide by African Union guidelines, which prevent it from fielding its candidacy on its own. The UN High-Level Panel had suggested an alternative and more participatory plan for a regular system of rotating members, which was rejected by India and Brazil.

The expansion of the Security Council, however, would favour only a few players. In order to achieve the lasting democratisation of the organization, the General Assembly would also have to be strengthened.

Divergences between the national positions of the three Southern powers became clear in the Doha Round negotiations. New Delhi's position on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and non-tariff barriers separates it from Brasilia and Pretoria. In particular, India demands protection against agricultural imports, whereas Brazil advocates a broad liberalisation of the global agricultural market.

"In addition, the national interests of the IBSA countries are partly at odds with the interests of developing countries, which they claim to represent. As net food importers, most of the least developed countries (LDCs) cannot be interested in the reduction of agricultural subsidies in Europe and the United States that keep food prices low," notes Flemes.

Moreover, while the WTO negotiations have hardly progressed in terms of content, Brazil and India have been able to improve their positions in the international trade hierarchy. At the 2004 WTO conference in Geneva they were invited to form the G-5 preparation group together with the European Union, the United States and Australia.

At the German G-8 Summit in 2007, Brazil, India and South Africa (with China and Mexico) were invited to formalise their dialogue with the elite club of the richest industrialized countries through the so-called Heiligendamm or O-5 process.

These invitations, as well as the role of the G-20 in the handling of the recent financial crisis, reflect increasing acceptance of the IBSA countries' (prospective) major-power status by the established great powers.

While the IBSA initiative may thus be seen as an effort to increase its members' global bargaining power, the cooperation between South Africa, India and Brazil also focuses on concrete areas of collaboration. Trade, health, energy security and transport are only the most prominent issues of IBSA's sectoral collaboration.

"IBSA can therefore be characterised as both a strategic alliance for the pursuit of the common interests of emerging powers in global institutions, and also as a platform for bilateral, trilateral and interregional South-South cooperation," writes Flemes.

The sectoral cooperation is to form a sound basis for trilateral diplomacy in world affairs. But the potential synergies of IBSA's sectoral collaboration are doubtful. In particular, the prospects for bilateral and trilateral trade are limited by a number of constraints, says the GIGA researcher. The economies' different sizes and degrees of global integration lead to different degrees

of trade benefits. But the main obstacle consists of the limited complementarities between the three markets, since India, Brazil and South Africa produce similar goods and compete for access to the markets of the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Additionally, the fact that developed countries have asymmetrical capabilities relative to the IBSA countries allows them to demobilise the South-South alliance through cross-bargaining on a trade chessboard of variable geometry.

But trade is merely one of many undertakings in this multidimensional initiative. India, Brazil and South Africa are not natural trading partners, and the limits to commercial exchanges between them should be recognised.

While a trilateral trade agreement has been alluded to on numerous occasions, such an ambitious undertaking is unlikely to materialise between these three countries, which are technically bound to regional trade blocs. A more realistic approach could involve trade facilitation and the improvement of transport and infrastructure links between them.

Other sectors, such as health and energy security, seem to offer more synergies. As regards HIV/AIDS, for instance, the interests of the three countries are quite convergent. India has the second largest number of HIV-positive people (2.4 million) and also the largest generic drugs industry.

Brazil has developed role-model public policies in fighting AIDS and exports its know-how to several African, Asian and Latin American countries. South Africa has a high demand in this regard, since it has the largest number of HIV-positive people (5.7 million) and faces severe constraints in democratising public health services regarding the epidemic.

In recent years the IBSA countries have been prominent in the G-21 lobby that succeeded in lessening the negative effects of TRIPS with regard to patents that impose high costs for HIV/AIDS drugs in developing countries, especially in Africa.

An interpretive statement of the 2001 Doha Declaration indicated that TRIPs should not prevent countries from fighting public health crises. Since then, TRIPs has provided for "compulsory licensing", allowing governments to issue licenses for drug production for the domestic market without the consent of the patent owner.

A 2003 agreement loosened the domestic market requirement, and allowed developing countries to export their locally produced generics to other countries facing epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The energy sector is another pivotal area of cooperation, as spelled out at a September 2006 summit in which a memorandum of understanding on biofuels was signed.

About 62 per cent of Brazil's energy requirements are met by renewable sources; of those, 10 per cent come from ethanol from sugarcane. In April 2002, India and Brazil signed a memorandum of understanding on technology-sharing in the blending of petrol and diesel with ethanol. India is the world's largest sugarcane producer. — Jaspal Singh ☑

Global Governance That Inspires and Unites

(Continued from page 1)

IBSA was particularly forceful on UN reform, stating with clarity the obvious need to drag the Security Council into the 21st century. The council, it urged, should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, and it should provide opportunities for greater representation from among representatives of developing countries – the vast majority of the world’s people.

REGULATION

Both BRIC and IBSA were unequivocal in reaffirming the “pressing need to foster and strengthen cooperation regarding the regulation and supervision of all segments, institutions and instruments of financial markets.”

Unlike some regional and special interest groupings that are disturbed by the role the Group of 20 (G20) can play on the world scene, BRIC – whose members are all members of G20 – “welcomed the fact that the G20 was confirmed as the premier forum for international economic coordination and cooperation of all its member states.”

Describing G20 as “broader, more inclusive, diverse, representative and effective” than “previous arrangements,” BRIC called on “all its member states to undertake further efforts to implement jointly the decisions adopted at the three G20 summits.”

BRIC urged that G20 should be “proactive and formulate a coherent strategy for the post- (financial) crisis period,” asserting that it stands “ready to make a joint contribution to this effort.”

IBSA made a strong pitch for the Human Rights Council whose work it commended. It proposed that human rights law be strengthened particularly in relation to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. This is a goal that no nation, big or small, can oppose in good conscience.

Also in the broad area of human rights, IBSA emphasized the importance of access to medicine, an issue of particular relevance to developing countries.

PARTNERSHIP

IBSA emphasized South-South cooperation as “a partnership among equals” that should be “guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.

Presumably, these characteristics are to be found in the operations of the IBSA Facility Fund that has so far brought direct benefits to Haiti, Palestine, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi, and Cambodia.

IBSA will also undertake the development of satellites that will “address common challenges in climate studies, agriculture and food security.” They will be deployed to promote space programs among the three member countries.

For the first time, IBSA foreign ministers met their colleague from the Palestinian National Authority, Riad Al-Malki, and pledged their support for the creation of a Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders.

IBSA and BRIC, like other similar groups, be they regional, sub-regional, or only compatible, are the product of an effort to change international relationships so that they might reflect

current realities and not those carried down from the past.

Hence, for instance, the determination within such groups to advocate change in the structure of the UN Security Council, and voting rules in the Bretton Woods institutions, or the “affirmative action” program that delivers the leadership of the World Bank to the U.S. and of the IMF to Europe.

REALITIES

Currently, BRIC countries represent 40 percent of the world’s population, close to 15 percent of global GDP, and almost 13 percent of international trade. The IMF has estimated that in a few years BRIC will account for over 60 percent of global economic growth. Should not they and IBSA members as well, be empowered to exercise international influence in keeping with their strengths?

As World Bank president Robert Zoellick said on the eve of the Bank’s Spring meetings, although not referring directly to IBSA or BRIC, economic progress in developing countries has “profound implications” for global cooperation, multilateralism and the work of international financial institutions.

“Economic and political tectonic plates are shifting,” Zoellick said. “We can shift with them, or we can continue to see a new world through the prism of the old.”

Zoellick’s sentiments are similar to those expressed by many developing country leaders, but this time they are coming from the other side of the trough.

RELIANCE

President Lula of Brazil, approaching the end of his presidency (which is subject to term limits) is blunt about the need for changes in the global system, and the responsibilities that countries such as the members of BRIC and IBSA can undertake.

“The international scene is cluttered with old problems, even as new ones emerge,” says Lula. “Neither the BRIC members nor any other countries are able to face them alone. In the past, unilateralism has led to impasses, if not human catastrophes, such as Iraq.

“In today’s world we must therefore rely increasingly on each other. For that to happen we must forge a more representative and transparent system of global governance that can both inspire unity of purpose and revitalize the collective will to seek consensual solutions. In this journey toward a new world, the BRIC countries are committed to working together to fulfill our responsibilities.”

There is much to commend in this perspective. There are, however, other pressing matters that also need attention. As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, speaking for himself and without in any way detracting from Lula’s position: “India’s greatest challenges are at home.” Did somebody whisper “the voice of reason”? – Ernest Corea | IDN-InDepthNews 