



# *brics-from-below!*

**BRICS**  
from-below  
2013

join a civil society summit during the

## *Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa*

### heads-of-state summit in Durban, March 22-27

In Durban, South Africa, five heads of state meet on March 26-27, to assure the rest of Africa that their countries' corporations are better investors in infrastructure, mining, oil and agriculture than the traditional European and US multinationals. The Brazil-Russia-India-China-SA (BRICS) summit will also include 16 heads of state from Africa, including some notorious tyrants. A new \$50 billion 'BRICS Bank' will probably be launched.



**FIFTH  
BRICS SUMMIT**  
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA  
26 - 27 MARCH 2013  
BRICS and AFRICA: Partnership for  
Development, Integration and Industrialisation

*Given how much is at stake, critical civil society must scrutinise the claims, the processes and the outcomes of the BRICS summit and its aftermath.* From 22-27 March, from university to townships to the city centre, learn about social, ecological, political and economic concerns – and resistances – and join the *brics-from-below* strategy of rebuilding BRICS, bottom up.

### *critical voices must now be heard*

Civil society critics point to four groups of problems in all the BRICS:

- *socio-economic rights violations*, including severe inequality, poverty, unemployment, disease, inadequate education and healthcare, costly basic services and housing, constraints on labour organising, and extreme levels of violence, especially against women (such as the high-profile rapes/murders of Delhi student Jyoti Singh Pandey last December 16, and in South Africa, of Anene Booysen on February 2 in Bredasdorp, Reeva Steenkamp on February 14 in Pretoria, and countless others);
- *political and civil rights violations*, such as widespread police brutality, increased securitisation of our societies, militarisation and arms trading, prohibitions on protest, rising media repression and official secrecy, activist jailings and torture, debilitating patriarchy and homophobia, and even state-sanctioned massacres (including in Durban where the notorious Cato Manor police hit squad executed more than 50 suspects in recent years);
- *regional domination by BRICS economies*, including extraction of hinterland raw materials, and promotion of 'Washington Consensus' ideology which reduces poor countries' policy space (for example, in the BRICS 2012 donation of \$75 billion to the International Monetary Fund with the mandate that the IMF be more 'nasty', according to South African Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, or in the desire of China, Brazil and India to revitalise the World Trade Organisation to maximise their trading power against weaker neighbours); and
- *'maldevelopment' based on elite-centric, consumerist, financialised, eco-destructive, climate-insensitive, nuclear-powered strategies* which advance corporate and parastatal profits, but which create multiple crises within all the BRICS (as witnessed during the Marikana Massacre carried out by police on behalf of Lonmin platinum corporation last August, and in South Durban where R225 billion (\$25 bn) in white-elephant state infrastructure subsidies for chaotic port, freight and petrochemical industry expansion – and more labour-broking exploitation – are being vigorously resisted by victim communities).

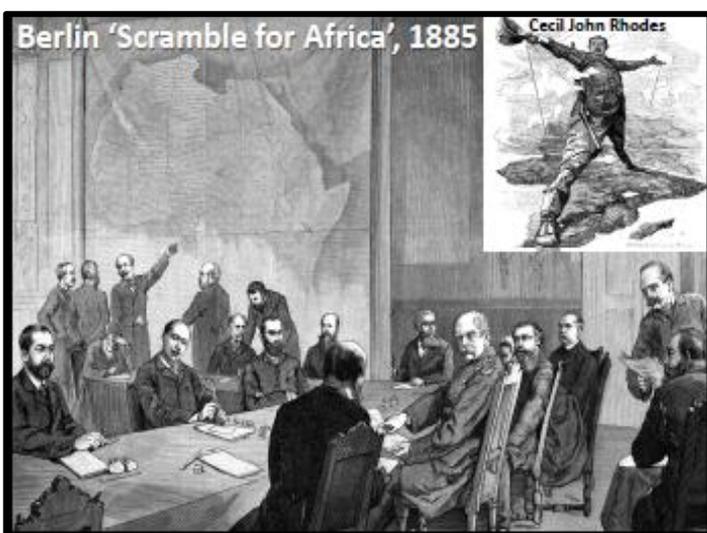
Confusingly to some, BRICS regimes carry out this agenda at the same time they offered radical, even occasionally 'anti-imperialist' rhetoric, accompanied by mainly trivial diplomatic actions. Yet the BRICS alliance is incoherent, as shown in the elites' debilitating disagreement over who would lead the IMF and World Bank in 2011-12. In the UN Security Council, BRICS countries seek greater power *for themselves, not the collective*: repeated bids for permanent membership by India, Brazil and South Africa are opposed by Russia and China. And recall the humiliation we suffered when Beijing told Pretoria's Home Affairs Minister (now African Union chairperson) Nkozasana Dlamini-Zuma *not to grant a visa to the Dalai Lama to attend Archbishop Tutu's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party in 2011, or attend a 2009 Tibet solidarity gathering*. We seem to have *lost foreign policy autonomy* to Chinese whims.

# ***BRICS in Durban: latest corporate carve-up of Africa***

Meanwhile, the African continent has been overwhelmed by BRICS corporations. The rate of trade between Africa and the major emerging economies – especially China – rose from 5 to 20 percent of all commerce since 1994, when apartheid ended. Destructive though it often is, one of Pretoria's leading objectives, according to deputy foreign minister Marius Fransman, is that 'South Africa presents a gateway for investment on the continent, and over the next 10 years the African continent will need \$480 billion for infrastructure development.'

'Resource Curse' maldevelopment often follows such infrastructure. This is also true, geopolitically, when it comes to facilitating BRICS investments. In January 2013, for example, Pretoria deployed 400 troops to the Central African Republic during a coup attempt because '*We have assets there that need protection,*' according to deputy foreign minister Ebrahim Ebrahim. Allegations by a former South African official are that these *mineral interests* include uranium arranged via corrupt heads-of-state collaboration, and has Ebrahim confirmed that Pretoria sent sophisticated arms to the brutal regime of François Bozizé. Other extreme cases are the Democratic Republic of the Congo where Johannesburg-based mining capital (AngloGold Ashanti) paid off warlords in a region where five million people were killed, and Zimbabwe where Chinese firms and a military junta – along with SA businesses – prop up President Robert Mugabe's rule, together looting the country of billions of dollars worth of diamonds.

In 2010, 17 out of Africa's top 20 companies were South African, even after extreme capital flight from Johannesburg a decade earlier, which saw Anglo American, De Beers, SA Breweries and Old Mutual relocate to London. These firms' post-apartheid role as '*new imperialists*' was of '*great concern*', according to leading South African politician Jeff Radebe (now Minister of Justice): '*There are strong perceptions that many South African companies working elsewhere in Africa come across as arrogant, disrespectful, aloof and careless in their attitude towards local business communities, work-seekers and even governments.*'



Just as in Cecil John Rhodes' day, the greed of South African business is backed by government officials, through the (failed) *New Partnership for Africa's Development* – praised as '*philosophically spot on*' by the Bush Administration – and useless *African Peer Review Mechanism*. More recently, South Africa's National Development Plan conceded that there is a '*perception of the country as a regional bully.*'

In bullying Africa, the traditional SA, US, European, Australian and Canadian corporations have been joined by major firms from China, India and Brazil. Their looting has mainly built upon colonial infrastructural foundations – road, rail, pipeline and port expansion – connected to mines, plantations, petroleum and gas.

*For these reasons, will Durban 2013 be known as the logical successor to Africa's initial carve-up: Berlin 1885?*

## ***climate crisis amplified by 'BASIC' polluters***

Africa's fate depends upon halting greenhouse gas emissions; the Darfur conflict is considered the world's first war caused by climate change, and much more geopolitical upheaval will follow unless global warming is prevented. The climate crisis could kill 185 million Africans unnecessarily this century, according to Christian Aid.

*Ignoring this extreme threat*, South Africa's post-apartheid government increased the country's CO2 emissions levels to levels far higher than apartheid's, and is *now building the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> largest coal-fired power plants*. Pretoria also actively colluded with Washington to destroy effective global climate governance within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In December 2009, in a small room in Copenhagen, Barack Obama and the leaders of the 'BASIC' bloc – Brazil, South Africa, India and China – demolished the Kyoto Protocol. As Bill McKibbin of 350.org put it, they '*wrecked the UN*' by imposing a *non-binding deal* that will raise average temperatures four degrees this century, and far higher in Africa. How could this happen? WikiLeaks unveiled how US diplomats arm-twisted and bribed other countries to accept the planet-threatening '*Copenhagen Accord.*'

As for the 'Durban Platform' signed at the 2011 UN climate summit thanks to another last-minute deal between BRICS and Washington, it '*was promising because of what it did not say,*' according to US State Department adviser Trevor Houser: '*There is no mention of historic responsibility or per capita emissions. There is no mention of economic development as the priority for developing countries. There is no mention of a difference between developed and developing country action.*' No one can dispute the fact that the Durban Platform has severely limited African countries' ability to defend against climate disaster, and that *the name 'Durban' is now a climate swear-word.*

# world financial crisis and a 'new' BRICS Bank

There is similar collusion with Washington when it comes to global finance: in July 2012, the BRICS treasuries sent \$75 billion in fresh capital to the IMF, which was seeking new funds for bailing out for banks exposed in Southern Europe. Like Africa's experience since the early 1980s, the resulting austerity in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Ireland and other economies that continue unravelling does *far more harm than good to both local and global economies*. As for voting power within the IMF, the result of this BRICS intervention was that China gained many more votes (for dollars rule at the IMF), while *Africa actually lost a substantial fraction of its share*.

And when it comes to reforming world finance, Pretoria representatives brag that they stand alongside the US government in *opposing global financial regulation* (such as the 'Robin Hood tax' on financial transactions).

BRICS interventions to be discussed in Durban are more dangerous yet. A new BRICS Development Bank will exacerbate the human, ecological and economic messes caused by multilateral financing, given the deplorable track record of precedent institutions in Brazil, China and South Africa – including *the Development Bank of Southern Africa, which in 2012 lost R370 million and was termed 'shoddy' by its own CEO*.

As a result, Africa could become an even more violent battleground for conflicts between BRICS firms intent on extraction. Specific BRICS companies have been criticised by their victims, and require unified civil society campaigning and boycotts to generate solidaristic counter-pressure, whether Brazil's Vale and Petrobras, or South Africa's Anglo or BHP Billiton (albeit with London and Melbourne financial headquarters), or India's Tata or Arcelor-Mittal, or Chinese state-owned firms and Russian energy corporations.



## why we need *brics-from-below!*

Building a bottom-up civil society network to analyse, watchdog and represent silenced voices of dissent has never been more important. To assist in building such a network, join us from 22-27 March:

### Friday 22 March: University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College)

- 12:30-2pm *CCS Seminar on SA Oppressions and Resistances* featuring Ashwin Desai and Kagiso Molope
- 7-10pm *UKZN Time of the Writer* festival panel (Sneddon Theatre at Howard College Campus), with a focus on **critiques of SA political economy and of our stunted transition**, including Sampie Terreblanche and Andile Mngxitama

### Saturday 23 March: Settlers Primary School, Wentworth, South Durban

- *brics-from-below* free morning, with space for meetings; reality walking tour of hated Engen oil refinery at 11am
- 1-6pm: **Teach-Out, Teach-In in South Durban** in Wentworth's Settlers Primary, aiming to educate *brics-from-below* visitors about adverse conditions in SA communities, and for visitors to educate SA about their struggles
- 6-10pm: cultural event to entertain *brics-from-below* and link our counter-hegemonic culture to *brics* popular traditions

### Sunday 24 March: Durban 'Reality Tours' and meeting spaces available

- *brics-from-below* Reality Tours (various sites with inexpensive transport) and meeting sites – To Be Announced

### Monday 25 March: Diakonia church centre in central Durban:

- Diakonia as venue for *brics-from-below* summit, Day 1 - *specific eco-social-labour struggles within BRICS*
- *People's Dialogue* panel sessions and other meetings

### Tuesday 26 March: Diakonia church centre

- Diakonia as venue for *brics-from-below* Summit, Day 2 – *the role of BRICS in Africa and at global scale*
- a special series of talks will occur on the **BRICS Development Bank** arranged by *Mais Democracia* (Brazil NGO)
- flights from Durban to the **World Social Forum** in Tunisia leave as late as 7pm, arriving in Tunis at 1pm
- evening event (including WSF video link) with public debate between *brics-from-below* and BRICS leaders

### Wednesday 27 March: from Diakonia to Durban City Hall to the ICC

- Diakonia as main morning site for *brics-from-below* meetings of visiting groups
- *brics-from-below* to visit International Convention Centre around lunchtime

### Durban *brics-from-below* hosts:

**groundWork, Friends of the Earth-South Africa** (<http://www.groundwork.org.za>)  
**the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance** (<http://www.sdcea.co.za>)  
**and the University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society** (<http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za>)

# where are *brics-from-below* (and above)?

MARCH 22: UKZN CCS hosts 'SA oppressions & resistances' seminar, and Sneddon Theatre hosts *Time of the Writer*

MARCH 23: SDCEA and Settlers Primary School host *brics-from-below* community teach-in/teach-out

MARCH 25-26: Diakonia

MARCH 27: City Hall and ICC (where you will find BRICS-FROM-ABOVE)



South Durban Community Environmental Alliance



Institute of Globalisation Studies, Moscow



aglob

Глобальная аналитика



**BRICS** from-below 2013



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