

***THE DIPLOMACY OF THE INDIA, BRAZIL, SOUTH  
AFRICA DIALOGUE FORUM: TRILATERAL  
OPPORTUNITIES AND GLOBAL LIMITATIONS***

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A mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree **MASTER OF DIPLOMATIC STUDIES**

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2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the journey that has led to reaching this important milestone, I have received support and encouragement from many quarters.

I would like to acknowledge the opportunity afforded to me by the Department of International Relations and Co-operation to further my studies through the MDIPS programme at the University of Pretoria.

My supervisor, Professor Garth Le Pere, has been a great mentor and never shirked from stretching me in the process. Thank you very much Prof.

I also drew strength from family and friends who were a constant source of support and encouragement to me throughout this journey.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my family, particularly my dear husband Musa Shongwe, who has been a constant support and inspiration. Thank you Love for those hot teas that you brought me in the middle of the night whilst preparing for presentations that seemed intimidating at times. I also thank my children, Simphiwe and Unathi for their long suffering and understanding when they could not fully access their mother due to the demands of my studies.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for sustaining me with His love, grace and strength in this entire journey.

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents who instilled the importance of education in all of us as we grew up. Although my father Mike Malizo Ntonga could not live to see this and many other milestones of my life, my mother Belinda Nomazotsho Ntonga ensured that she sustained the vision. This achievement is yet another testament of perseverance, a virtue that my parents taught us and also lived by!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS	vi-vii
ABSTRACT	viii
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-9</b>
<b>2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b>	
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Emergence and positioning of IBSA as key actors in global governance and regional politics	10
2.2.1 Conceptual framework of regional-powers	12
2.2.2 Conceptual framework of middle-powers	15
2.3 Location of the IBSA Dialogue Forum with the main International Relations Theories	18
2.3.1 Realism	18
2.3.2 Liberalism	20
2.4 Conclusion	22
<b>3. THE FORMATION OF THE INDIA, BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA FORUM (IBSA) AND FOREIGN POLICY CONVERGENCES OF IBSA COUNTRIES</b>	
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Origins of the IBSA Dialogue Forum	25
3.3 The IBSA Agenda	26
3.3.1 Political consultations	26
3.3.2 Multilateral co-operation	27
3.3.3 Sectoral cooperation	28
3.3.4 IBSA Trust Fund	29
3.4 The Institutionalisation of IBSA	30
3.5 Criticism of Current Institutionalisation	31
3.6 Characterisation of IBSA countries	32
3.7 South Africa's Foreign Policy	33
3.8 Brazil's Foreign Policy	36
3.9 India's Foreign Policy	39
	iii

3.10	Conclusion	41
<b>4.</b>	<b>THE IBSA TRILATERAL SECTORAL CO-OPERATION AGENDA</b>	
4.1.	Introduction	45
4.2	The Scope of the IBSA Sectoral Co-operation Agenda	46
4.3	Overview of IBSA Working Groups- Opportunities and Constraints	47
4.3.1	Working Group on Agriculture	47
4.3.2	Working Group on Culture	49
4.3.3	Working Group on Defence	49
4.3.4	Working Group on Education	51
4.3.5	Working Group on Energy	52
4.3.6	Working Group on Environment and Climate Change	53
4.3.7	Working Group on Health	54
4.3.8	Working Group on Human Settlements	55
4.3.9	Working Group on Information Society	56
4.3.10	Working Group on Public Administration and Governance	57
4.3.11	Working Group on Revenue Administration	58
4.3.12	Working Group on Science and Technology	59
4.3.13	Working Group on Social Development	60
4.3.14	Working Group on Tourism	61
4.3.15	Working Group on Trade and Investment	61
4.3.16	Working Group on Transport	63
4.4	Assessment of the Operational and Technical Constraints of the IBSA Sectoral Working Groups	65
4.5	IBSA Trilateral Co-operation within the Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks of Emerging Countries	66
4.6	Conclusion	67
<b>5.</b>	<b>THE IBSA GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AGENDA OF THE IBSA DIALOGUE FORUM</b>	
5.1	Introduction	69
5.2	The Scope of the IBSA Global Agenda	69
5.3	Thematic areas of IBSA's activism	71
5.3.1	Reform of Governance Institutions	71

5.3.1.1	United Nations Reform	72
5.3.1.2	The World Trade Organisation	76
5.3.1.3	Reform of International Financial Institutions	78
5.3.2	Human Rights	81
5.3.3	Global Security	83
5.3.4	Sustainable Development and Climate Change	86
5.3.5	Classifying the IBSA posture in global governance debates within conceptual and theoretical frameworks	88
5.4.	Conclusion	88
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>102</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC – African National Congress

ASEAN- Association of South East Asian Nations

AU – African Union

BASIC – Brazil, South Africa, India, China

BRICS – Brazil, India, China, South Africa countries

BWIs – Bretton Woods Institutions

CD – Conference on Development

CNI – National Confederation of Industry

COP – Conference of Parties

DFA – Department of Foreign Affairs

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

DIRCO – Department of International Relations and Co-operation

EU – European Union

FTA – Free Trade Agreement

G-4 – Group of four countries in the WTO

G-7 – Group Seven Industrialised Countries

G-8 – Group of Seven Industrialised countries plus Russia

G-20 – Group of Twenty

G-77 – Group of Seventy Seven developing countries plus China

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HESA – Higher Education South Africa

HIV/AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency

IBSA – India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum

IBSA CETI – IBSA Centre for Exchange of Tax Information

IBSA-FTA – India, Brazil, South Africa Free Trade Agreement

IBSAMAR – India, Brazil, South Africa Maritime Exercise

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

IFIs – International Financial Institutions

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LDCs – Least Developing Countries

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals  
MEA – Ministry of External Affairs  
MERCOSUR- Common Market of the South  
MOU- Memorandum of Understanding  
MSME – Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises  
NAM – Non Aligned Movement  
NAMA 11 – Non-Agricultural Market Access countries  
NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa’s Development  
NSG – Nuclear Suppliers’ Group  
OAU – Organisation of African Unity  
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
OPEC – Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries  
PTA – Preferential Trade Agreement  
SAARC –South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation  
SACU- Southern African Customs Union  
SADC – Southern African Development Community  
SANRF – South African National Research Foundation  
SIDS – Small Islands Developing States  
SMME – Small Medium Micro Enterprises  
TCDC – Technical Co-operation amongst Developing Countries  
T-FTA – Trilateral-Free Trade Agreement  
UN – United Nations  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
USA – United States of America  
UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly  
UNHRC – United Nations Human Rights Council  
UNSC – United Nations Security Council  
WB – World Bank  
WTO – World Trade Organisation

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the evolution of the India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) which was formed in 2003 by these three regional-powers which are also pivotal emerging democracies of the South. IBSA not only represents a new approach to South-South co-operation but also in the conduct of international relations. Its primary multilateral objective is to counter-balance the dominance of the North, led by the USA, in interstate relations and in particular by attempting to shape and influence the agendas and structures of global governance in the interests of developing countries.

The emergence of IBSA represents some of the foreign policy responses and activism of emerging regional-powers to the widening political, economic and social differences between the developing South and the developed North. This is considered in terms of relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The empirical core of the study concentrates on how IBSA countries, on one hand, apply diplomacy to advance trilateral co-operation amongst themselves; and, on the other, the extent to which they are able to influence the management of the global system of governance. A critical aspect of this is an examination of the tensions and limitations that arise between IBSA's trilateral agenda which promotes instrumental or material ends and objectives, *and* the aspirations of its global agenda with respect to normative goals and objectives of promoting fairness and equity in the international system.

The study identifies areas that are critical for strengthening trilateral sectoral co-operation and opportunities to boost South-South co-operation. It also assesses whether the scope of the IBSA global agenda is feasible given the structural limitations faced by middle-powers in global governance. It concludes with a critical summation of these issues, with some reflection of what the establishment of BRICS portends for the future of IBSA. Finally, it presents recommendations for the strengthening and rationalisation of IBSA's trilateral sectoral co-operation and global agendas in order to sustain the promotion of South-South co-operation as the key objective of the Forum.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introductory overview

The Brazil, India, South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) was initiated in June 2003 in Brasilia by the Foreign Ministers of the three countries. The Brasilia meeting was a culmination of extensive consultations amongst IBSA Heads of State on the formation of a strategic alliance of the South to countervail the dominance of the North in global governance and to advance the agenda of the South.

According to the Brasilia Declaration (2003:1), the Forum was necessitated by the need for a “process of dialogue” amongst like-minded developing countries which share common concerns and views on the restructuring of global governance and strengthening of the agenda of the South. The Brasilia Declaration (2003:2) also identified a need for trilateral co-operation amongst the three countries in areas of mutual interest as a vehicle for the promotion of social and economic development. The IBSA Dialogue Forum can thus be characterised as both a strategic alliance for a pursuit of common interests of developing countries in strategic areas of global governance as well as a platform for trilateral and interregional South-South co-operation (Flemes 2007:6).

Following the Brasilia launch, the IBSA Heads of State used their meeting on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2003 to formally launch the Dialogue Forum onto the world stage.

The Forum brings together three regional-powers which are amongst the pivotal democracies of the South (Landsberg, 2006:5), and which share complementary political, economic and foreign policy rationales.

The emergence of IBSA has occurred in a fundamentally changed international context which is dominated by a sole superpower, the USA, whose confluence of power (military, economic, and cultural power) gives it an extraordinary ability to shape the global future with a deeply embedded

historical tendency to act unilaterally. The US's preponderance and power, coupled with the onset of globalisation, has radically changed power dynamics and has also created new security and economic dilemmas in the inter-state system. Most developing countries remain in the periphery and their economies have been rendered more vulnerable as a result of the unfettered forces of globalisation. The complex interdependence that emerged as a result of globalisation has generated increasing calls for better-functioning international institutions and new forms of global governance (Hurrell, 2006:6) The dominance of the North, led by the USA, in shaping global governance structures such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and the United Nations has contributed to the marginalisation of the voice of the South. There is now growing criticism of the legitimacy of these global institutions particularly since they do not represent nor recognise the voice of all nations, especially the poor countries of the South (Alden & Vieira 2005:1081, Phillips, 2008:6).

Kegley and Raymond (2007:113) argue that the political, economic, and social differences that characterise countries of the South and North have greatly influenced the foreign policy responses of developing countries. This is demonstrated by an increased activism by developing countries, either individually or as exclusive groups, in challenging the structural positions and ideological assumptions of leading states of the North. This was evidenced by the proactive diplomacy applied by a group of developing countries during the 2003 WTO negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, which effectively mobilised a coalition, called the G20, and comprised of key actors of the South, including, India, Brazil, China as well as South Africa. They used their collective moral weight to block consensus on a text that completely ignored the concerns of developing countries (Narlikar & Tussie, 2004: 951-953).

Alden and Vieira (2005:1077) have argued that the behaviour of developing countries in the WTO in 2003 (during which IBSA countries played a significant role as part of the G20 coalition) marked a significant shift in the post-Cold War international relations paradigm; a shift from the post 9/11 era which was viewed as a revival of realism, characterised by a more vigorous and contested

relationship between the South and the North. The rise in both political and economic influence of a number of developing countries has generated debates about how these countries could influence the global system of governance and contain as well as counter-balance American unilateralism and western dominance.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum can, therefore be characterised as both a strategic alliance for the pursuit of common interests of developing countries in strategic areas of global governance as well as a platform for trilateral and interregional South- South co-operation (Flemes 2007:6).

This study examines how the IBSA countries, on the one hand, apply diplomacy to advance trilateral co-operation amongst themselves, and, on the other, the extent to which they are able to influence the management of the global system of governance. More specifically, the study will examine what considered tensions there are between the IBSA's trilateral agenda, which promotes instrumental or material ends and objectives, and the aspirations of its global agenda with respect to expressed normative goals and objectives. The argument of the study is, therefore, that the tension between the instrumental objectives and the normative goals of the IBSA agenda might not be complementary or mutually enforcing and could, over the long term, undermine the efficacy of one of its fundamental objectives, namely, improving and enhancing South-South co-operation.

## **1.2 Conceptualisation**

IBSA countries are regarded as regional-powers due to the combination of their economic and military power in their respective regions and the leading roles they assume as regional peacemakers. These countries have also consolidated their economic dominance through the pursuit of regional trading arrangements such as MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). They have also used their leadership in these respective regional institutions as launching pads for global action in order to

better represent the voices of their regions. (Alden & Vieira, 2005:1080; Fledes, 2007:8).

Fledes (2007:8), however, sees the position of these countries in the international system more as middle-powers. For him, the role of IBSA in global governance is based much more on their global justice advocacy than on their regional hegemonic status. He further argues that the IBSA countries have been categorised as middle-powers in order to “capture their emerging status at the global level”. Fledes (2007:8) defines middle-powers as states that are active in international organisations and support the objective of international peace and security as their defined national interests in order to promote a more stable world order. He adds that the foreign policy objectives of middle-powers consequently speak to, amongst others, issues of international co-operation, solidarity, responsibility for the global environment, and domestication of international relations. The conceptualisation of IBSA countries will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

### **1.3 Rationale and Significance**

The inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum has attracted the attention of many scholars and there is a growing body of literature that has assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the alliance. Some literature has focussed on the feasibility of trilateral sectoral co-operation amongst the three countries whilst another body of literature has begun to assess the opportunities and challenges of IBSA Dialogue Forum as a representative voice of the South in global governance issues in general and in advancing the agenda of the South in particular.

Soko (2007:1) argues that the focus of the IBSA multilateral agenda has been to change the balance of power between the South and North by pushing the democratisation of global governance institutions such as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods Institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) and the World Trade Organisation; developing alternatives to the contemporary model of globalisation; as well as giving concrete expression to the ideal of promoting the economic and social interests of the South. Given such a wide agenda

and the complexities of issues in these institutions, a question that arises is whether this noble goal of IBSA is indeed achievable in terms of the current global dynamics?

Landsberg (2006: 5) sees the strategic importance of IBSA as embedded in its ability to develop well-thought out co-ordinated and collective positions and views on key global, regional, and national questions. He, however, believes that IBSA has yet to take advantage of its potential because the South is in need of a strong voice in order to advance its agenda. The decisive role of IBSA countries, in concert with China, was demonstrated during the Bali climate change negotiations in 2007. These countries' resolve to play their part in global efforts to prevent climate change is seen by Beri (2008: 823) as a positive show of IBSA's muscle in multilateral negotiations.

Apart from sharing a similar world view and co-operating on political issues, Beri (2008: 818) observes that the IBSA countries have advanced trilateral co-operation and have signed a number of co-operation agreements in many fields, citing the strategic importance of trilateral co-operation in the fields of energy and defence. She provides a comparative analysis of IBSA and the Russia, India, China trilateral dialogue that was launched in 2002, arguing that IBSA has made more substantive progress.

There are positive prospects of deepened intra-IBSA trade since its inception in 2003. Le Pere (2006:2) notes that Brazil –India trade has increased from US\$397 million in 1997 to US\$2,3 billion in 2005, while Brazil – South Africa trade has increased from US\$1,1 billion in 2002 to US\$2,3 billion in 2005, and South Africa's trade with India increased from US\$589 million in 2000 to US\$925 million in 2003. The commitment of the three countries to substantially increase intra-IBSA trade was articulated during the second IBSA Trilateral Forum in India which also saw the launch of the IBSA Investment Forum (New Delhi Plan of Action:2004).

Much of the literature on the IBSA Dialogue Forum examines either the global governance agenda or trilateral co-operation agenda in a linear form and these

two agendas are somewhat treated as independent of each other. An area that requires further interrogation is the extent to which the IBSA Dialogue Forum could use trilateral co-operation to leverage the agenda of the South as well as advance multilateral co-operation on issues of global governance. Consequently, this study seeks to particularly examine the opportunities, tensions and prospects for deeper trilateral co-operation amongst the three countries while focussing on challenges and opportunities for multilateral co-operation.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The strength of the IBSA Dialogue Forum lies in the ability of the three countries to use their collective strength as regional hegemony to play an anchoring and pivotal role in providing the gravitational pull for a new type of South-South engagement that will articulate a more progressive agenda, deepen trilateral relations as well as deepen regional co-operation amongst the three regions (Le Pere, 2006:2).

Flemes (2007:11) argues that the activism of India, Brazil, and South Africa in WTO negotiations and their participation in the ongoing dialogue with the Group of 7 industrialised countries plus Russia (G8) is not as much about the prestige of being seen as major players at the global stage. It is also functional and instrumental given the patterns of foreign policy strategies applied by these countries in pursuing their respective national interests while promoting those of developing countries. Although these countries do not have great 'hard power' status at global level they do, however, command international influence because of their global justice discourse and 'soft power' attraction.

By examining the origins of the IBSA Dialogue Forum and its tenets, the study will analyse how the IBSA countries apply diplomacy to advance trilateral co-operation amongst them and how they intend to influence the management of the global governance system.

It will examine the opportunities and challenges of IBSA at the level of trilateral sectoral co-operation. What has been achieved in this area since 2003? Are the

benefits of trilateral co-operation shared equitably amongst the members? If not, what are the challenges, and how can these challenges be addressed? How can the sustainability of the trilateral co-operation be ensured? These questions relate to IBSA's instrumental purposes yet closely allied to these questions is the need to also consider IBSA's role in the management of the global system of governance. Is the trilateral agenda complementary and mutually supportive of IBSA's global ambitions as set out in its governance agenda? In particular, the study seeks to examine the extent to which the IBSA Dialogue Forum sufficiently represents the collective voice of the South. How strong are the currencies of "soft power" to execute an ambitious global governance agenda and what are the limitations? Will IBSA fall foul of the empty declaratory diplomacy of other South formations like the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, which have been widely adjudged as being ineffectual?

## **1.5 Methodology**

The study is a qualitative study of a forum of emerging developing powers that hold a prospect of influencing global governance while using their economic and political strengths to entrench strong socio-economic ties.

The study makes use of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources will include documents that flow from the IBSA process since 2003. These include declarations, communiqués, statements, and speeches. Secondary sources include books and scholarly journal articles as well as relevant papers from other actors such as think-tanks and media on the topic of enquiry.

## **1.6 Limitations**

This study particularly covers the period from the inception of the Dialogue Forum, taking into account the influential roles played by the initiating Heads of State of the IBSA countries which were in power until the end of 2010 when President Lula of Brazil, the remaining initiator left office. The study will observe some trends and developments beyond 2010 in as far as they support or dispute the rationale of the study.

## **1.7 Structure and Overview**

This chapter provided the background to the study and its significance. It also reflected on the delineation of the research problem and what the study would seek to investigate, the methodology to be followed as well as the limitations inherent therein.

Chapter 2 provides the conceptual and theoretical basis of the study by discussing the various conceptual frameworks and also the International Relations theories that help to define and contextualise the emergence of the IBSA Dialogue Forum.

Chapter 3 discusses the origins of IBSA, its co-operation agenda as well as its institutional mechanisms. It also provides social and economic profiles of the three countries. In the context of the theoretical considerations of the previous chapter, this chapter examines the individual IBSA countries' foreign policies and their strategic significance in the respective regions to which they belong.

Chapter 4 examines the scope of the IBSA trilateral cooperation and the instruments that are currently in place to advance the co-operation. It assesses the architecture of the trilateral co-operation since its inception, including policies, institutions, agreements, and commitments. The chapter also examines constraints and areas of potential mutual benefit for the three countries in this expanding co-operation. It concludes with an assessment of whether the trilateral co-operation can be used to leverage the agenda of the South or whether such co-operation is more inward-looking in terms of what the three countries can accomplish to address their own developmental challenges and problems.

Chapter 5 examines the IBSA's global agenda and its manifestations. The IBSA multilateral agenda, as driven by the Heads of State and Government of these countries contains a big thematic menu of issues. This chapter examines the challenge that is posed by the scope and breadth of the agenda. It argues that the



capacity of the normative agenda is far beyond the capacity of these countries in terms of commitments already made in the trilateral co-operation agenda.

Chapter 6 critically evaluates the findings of the preceding chapters to determine the extent to which there is a tension between the instrumental objectives and the normative goals of the IBSA agenda. It identifies areas that are critical for the strengthening of trilateral sectoral co-operation and opportunities that are open for the Forum to boost South-South co-operation. It also assesses whether the scope of the IBSA global agenda is feasible given the structural limitations faced by middle-powers in global governance. Based on the findings, the Chapter presents options that are available for the IBSA Dialogue Forum to strengthen and rationalise both its trilateral and global agendas going forward if the promotion of South-South co-operation is to remain as the primary objective. The Chapter also identifies issues for further investigation.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the emergence of IBSA and its agenda in the wider global discourse of balance of power and institutional theories which are found in the main international relations paradigms of realism and liberalism, respectively. In this regard, regional-power and middle-power theories will be used to contextualise the study.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum represents an emerging coalition of three developing countries which are also key regional players. This is significant and historic in the evolution of international relations in a post-Cold War era that is dominated by the powerful North, with the USA as the main hegemon. Although the USA remains the dominant country in the global power hierarchy (Amin, 2006:25), other centres of power such as China, the European Union (EU), BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and recently South Africa) and G20<sup>1</sup> are emerging and could in future counterbalance US hegemony.

### 2.2 Emergence and positioning of IBSA as key actors in global governance politics and regional politics

Although the USA remains the most powerful state in the hierarchy of the international system of states, due particularly to its military supremacy, there is growing consensus that it has experienced a relative decline of strength in other spheres. For an example, the emergence of BRIC economies and their rising economic strength threaten to weaken US's global economic dominance. For the USA to be a unipolar power, it should not only dominate the military sphere but must also be an influential player in determining the trajectory of global economics and in playing a leading role in addressing transnational problems like terrorism, crime, global warming, and (health) pandemics (Nye, 1990:163; Cooper, 1997:2). Although the USA is still a

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<sup>1</sup> Group of finance ministers and central bank governors in the International Monetary Fund. This G20 is not the same G20 in the World Trade Organisation. The G20 of the WTO is a Coalition of 23 developing countries pressing for ambitious reforms of agriculture and improved market access in developed countries

dominant power economically accounting for a large part of the global GDP<sup>2</sup>, the present reality indicates that USA's leadership on these international issues has waned because of its reluctance to assume greater international responsibilities which Cooper (1997:2) attributes to the "erratic" posture of its foreign policy that is dominated by growing domestic pressures. This is evident, in particular, as the international agenda has increasingly come to focus extensively on "low" political issues such as socio-economic development. The nature of current transnational problems is such that they require redress not only by one superpower but through co-operation of many players. This has prompted some scholars to characterise the current international system as a uni-multipolar system (Flemes 2007:6; Haass, 2008:2-5).

Flemes (2007:7) further argues that from the realist perspective, a multipolar system results from the emergence of regional hegemonies that build coalitions to balance the superpower. Given the fact that developing countries do not have power in the international system (as demonstrated by their lack of voice and representation in the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN Security Council), Flemes (2007:6) is of the view that multipolarity becomes an organising principle in the statecraft of developing countries. This also presents opportunities for stronger developing countries to build regionally-based unipolarities in order to transform themselves into potential poles of a future multipolar system. Although IBSA countries are not yet regional unipolar powers, as will be demonstrated in this study, their future success lies in their ability to build strong coalitions among themselves and with other like-minded countries due to the dominant power status that they enjoy in their respective regions.

Cooper (1997:3) argues that with the diffusion of influence brought about by the change of landscape in post-Cold War international relations, there is greater room for secondary powers to stimulate relevant policy responses and

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<sup>2</sup> Index Mundi. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD/compare#country>. Accessed 4 November 2011

initiatives by strengthening the voice of developing countries in global governance debates.

The emergence of the IBSA Dialogue Forum is therefore seen by many as a concrete expression of this growing voice of the South in order to counterbalance the North, in particular the G-8. This notion stems from a proposition made by South Africa in 2003 for a formation of a G-7 of the South<sup>3</sup> to counterbalance the Group of 7<sup>4</sup> of industrialised countries (now referred to as the G-8 due to the inclusion of Russia). In order to appreciate their position and conduct, it is necessary that the concepts of “regional-power” and “middle-power” are clarified.

### **2.2.1 Conceptual framework of regional-powers**

Drawing from the frameworks proposed by several scholars including Wight’s analytic approach, Organski’s and Lemke’s versions of “Power Transition Theory”, as well as Buzan and Wæver’s “Regional Security Complex Theory”, Nolte (2010:886-889) proposes a multilevel analytical framework that embraces the regional, interregional, and global levels.

Essentially, the regional level refers to relations of a regional-power with other states in the region, whilst the interregional-level refers to relations between regional-powers. In line with Lemke’s multiple-level model, Nolte (2010:888) supports a parallel system of the global/regional and where necessary, sub-regional power hierarchies which are in a continuous process of interaction. Nolte (2010:888) also adds that the influence of external great powers on regional-powers vary based on the strength and policy influence of the regional-power. Similarly, the influence of regional-powers on the international or global arena also varies, as is the case of acceptance of a regional-power by other powers.

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<sup>3</sup> 2003 ANC Policy Conference Resolution

<sup>4</sup> Group of 7 industrialised countries (USA, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Canada, Japan)

In his working paper on “conceptualisation of Regional Powers”, Flemes (2007:11) builds on Nolte’s model by proposing four criteria for identifying and classifying regional-powers in international relations, namely:-

- Formulation of the claim to leadership, which implies a country’s willingness to assume the role of a stabiliser in regional security affairs and rule-maker in regional economics.
- Possession of the necessary power resources, which relates to a country’s possession of power resources that can make a difference in international bargaining. These include material<sup>5</sup> and ideational<sup>6</sup> resources.
- Employment of foreign policy instruments and choice of a foreign policy instrument - whether ideational or material - varies and is dictated by the circumstances at hand.
- The acceptance of the leadership role of a regional-power depends on the acceptance of this status and the associated hierarchy by the neighbouring states within the region. This acceptance is crucial for the regional-power to avoid reduced power to determine outcomes due to obstacles created especially by secondary regional-powers (Flemes, 2007:18).

In addition to these four criteria, Flemes (2007:11) posits that potential regional-powers will also be assessed by means of the two levels of analysis (i.e. regional and global - in line with Nolte’s framework) as well as their economic and security policies.

Based on the above characterisation, the IBSA countries have demonstrated their claim to leadership in their respective regions through their active involvement in peace missions, regional co-operation processes, and collective power bases to project world power in world affairs (Flemes, 2007:7). Whilst India is ranked the as one of the largest troop contributors to the United Nations, offering one brigade to the UN Standby Arrangements,

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<sup>5</sup> According to Flesmes material resources include military strength, economic competitiveness, technology, infrastructure, geography, energy, and agricultural, environmental and human development factors (Flemes, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> According to Flesmes, ideational resources consist of a country’s political and social values and objectives which help to promote the public reputation or exemplary behaviour of states. A country’s foreign policy reflects these resources (Flemes, 2007)

South Africa and Brazil have played active roles as peace-brokers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi (in the case of South Africa), as well as Colombia (in Brazil's case). The economic strength of these countries and their foreign policy aspirations have afforded them the opportunity to play prominent leadership roles in the co-operation and integration institutions of their respective regions such as the SAARC in the case of India, the MERCOSUR in the case of Brazil; and SADC in the case of South Africa. Their leading roles in these regional institutions also provide these countries with avenues to project their power in world affairs (Flemes, 2007:7).

The three countries have also used various foreign policy instruments to assert their interests regionally and internationally. In the case of South Africa, following the democratic dispensation in 1994, South Africa joined various multilateral and international institutions such as the United Nations, Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), WTO, G-77 as well as regional groupings such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the SADC. South Africa also played an active role in spearheading and promoting NEPAD and the integration of the SADC Regional Economic Community. As a demonstration of the country's commitment to multilateral institutionalism, South Africa hosted a number on multilateral conferences and Summits (Flemes, 2007:31).

Similarly, India and Brazil have also made their mark as active members of multilateral institutions like the United Nations, G-20 in the WTO, G-20 in the IMF, NAM and Commonwealth (In the case of India), and G-77. These two countries are also key players in their respective regional groupings as earlier indicated.

The launch of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in September 2003 by the IBSA Heads of States and Government in New York is but one demonstration of the use of institutional foreign policy instruments by the three countries. Whilst the IBSA initiative, on the one hand, is a trilateral co-operation vehicle to promote and strengthen the socio-economic interests of the three countries, it is also

seen as an effort to increase the bargaining power of countries of the South in global governance debates and institutions. The IBSA multilateral agenda demonstrates these countries' interest in influencing current multilateral institutions in order to reflect the needs of the South (Brasilia Declaration, 2003:1) The IBSA's engagement with the Group of 8 industrialised countries is a case in point.

The leadership roles of the IBSA countries as regional-powers have been acknowledged by the international community in particular the North, as demonstrated by the selective invitations they receive to exclusive meetings of great powers (Alden and Vieira, 2005:1080-1081). IBSA countries also acknowledge each other as regional leaders (Brasilia Declaration, 2003:1, Flandes, 2007:40). A common challenge that the IBSA countries face is the ambivalent reception of their leadership roles by countries in their respective regions. India continues to face a challenge mainly from Pakistan due to the ongoing territorial dispute over Kashmir and the attendant terrorist attacks on India by Pakistani militants (Tharoor:2007:5-6, Flandes 2007:7). Brazil faces challenges from Argentina and Mexico (as well as Venezuela) as exhibited by their (Argentina and Mexico's) rejection of Brazil's aspirations to a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (Varas, 2008: 2, Flandes 2007:7). South Africa also faces challenges from the SADC neighbours as demonstrated by the defence alliance between Zimbabwe, Namibia, DRC, and Angola which depart from the structures laid out in the SADC security architecture to which South Africa has also materially and intellectually contributed. South Africa also faces challenges from other African powers such as Egypt and Nigeria, which also contest South Africa's leadership role in the continent. At the same time, this does not limit Pretoria from playing a global role by using Africa as a base for projecting its power in world affairs (Flandes, 2007:49-50).

### **2.2.2 Conceptual framework of middle-powers**

The concept "middle-powers" refers to states that do not have great or major power status but cannot be categorised with small countries due to their international status and influence in international relations, including and

particularly in multilateral organisations (Flemes, 2007:8, Cooper, 1997:6). These countries, unlike major powers, do not possess the ability to operate in influential fashion right across the policy spectrum in transnational issues; hence they focus on selective activities based on their comparative strengths and competences (Cooper, 1997:6). This selective involvement by secondary powers is referred to by Cooper (1997) as “niche diplomacy”.

Cooper (1997:4-5) argues that the concept of niche diplomacy is founded on the notion that “responsibility in selected areas of international organisation should be commensurate with the burdens assumed”. It also builds on functionalism as an organising principle in the behaviour patterns of middle-power countries. This concept, according to Cooper (1997:5), also focuses on the ability of individual countries to fill niche spaces on a selective basis through policy ingenuity and execution. In other words, the concept of niche diplomacy speaks to a country’s conscious, strategic decision to focus or devote its resources and expertise to certain international activities and in areas of its comparative strength and advantage where tangible results could be achieved in line with a country’s national interest.

Flemes (2007:8) brings another characterisation of middle-powers by drawing from Robert Koehane (1969) who describes middle-powers as “states whose leaders consider that they cannot act alone effectively, but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through international institutions”.

The characterisation of middle-powers dating back from the post-World War II era to the current post-Cold War period includes, inter alia, the following elements, as elaborated by Cooper (1997:8 – 9):

- they act in support of the international system to create and maintain world order;
- as they cannot act alone, middle-powers mostly work through international institutions as alliances of small groups in order to have a systemic impact on the international system. Because of their interest in a stable and orderly international system, middle-powers advocate multilateralism



through organisations such as the United Nations and other regional organisations since these organisations by design usually advance processes of diplomatic problem-solving (Cox, 1996:245, Henrikson 1997:447);

- the focal point of middle-power diplomacy is mediation – a pattern that has become their defining characteristic behaviour since the 1940s to date;
- they emphasise coalition building and co-operation building;
- they demonstrate a certain degree of entrepreneurial and/or technical leadership; and
- they work as catalysts and facilitators on selective issues. Cooper (1997:9) describes catalysts as “generators” of political energy around specific issues whilst he sees “facilitators” as planners and convenors of meetings as well as “priority-setters” for future activities.

The above characterisation has attempted to capture the concept and characterisation of middle-powers as conceived mainly during the post-World War II and post-Cold War periods. The characterisation relates more to the classic middle-powers such as Canada, Australia, and some Scandinavian countries like Sweden. These countries by design and structure belong to the core and are regarded as developed countries (Cooper, 1997:2-3).

The post-Cold War international order, however, has seen the revision of the political map and now includes factors such as the role played by some developing countries that have emerged as strong powers in their respective regions.

Schoeman (2000:3) introduces a distinction between ‘classical middle-powers’ (those belonging to the developed world) and ‘emerging middle-powers’ (those belonging to the developing world). Schoeman (2000:3) argues that emerging middle-powers are also regional-powers in their own respective regions and “they are considered powerful irrespective of whether their power represents a regional relationship of enmity or amity”. The most distinguishing factor between classical and emerging powers is that classical middle-powers,

on one hand, only play their roles as brokers on the world scale and are always secondary to the superpowers. Emerging middle-powers, on the other hand, have an additional responsibility of regional peace-brokering and policing with some measure of support from big powers (Schoeman, 2000:3).

The characterisation of IBSA countries as both regional- and middle-powers is therefore supported by the preceding arguments. What is significant about the IBSA countries is that they are emerging developing countries which are key players in the respective regions as well as in the global arena.

While the study so far has attempted to establish the regional-power status of IBSA countries, Flandes (2007:8), however, sees the locus of these countries' influence in the international system more as middle-powers<sup>7</sup>. He sees the role of IBSA in global governance as based much more on their global justice discourse and more as “norm” entrepreneurs than on their regional hegemonic status. Flandes (2007:8) subscribes to the conceptualisation of middle-powers as states that are active in international organisations and which support the objective of international peace and security as their defined national interests in the pursuit of a more stable world order. He adds that the foreign policy objectives of middle-powers consequently speak to, amongst others, issues of international co-operation, solidarity, and responsibility for the global environment, as well as the domestication of international norms and values in their foreign policies.

### **2.3 Location of the IBSA Dialogue Forum within the main International Relations Theories**

The emergence of the IBSA in an international order that is starting to show the waning preponderance of American power has created rich academic space for theorisation about this Forum. IBSA, however, has some uniqueness of its own as it does not necessarily and classically fit into the main International Relations Theories. However, an attempt will be made to

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<sup>7</sup> Middle power will henceforth be used as a generic reference to IBSA countries taking into account Schoeman's characterisation.

use the variants of both Realism (and its variant, neo-realism) and Liberalism to contextualise the subject matter.

### **2.3.1 Realism and neo-realism**

Realism assumes that there is anarchy in the international system and that states are primary actors who are mainly concerned with their own security and who act not only in pursuit of their national interest but also in pursuit of power (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007:60). The core political values of this theory are national security and state survival.

For realists, the dominant political reality of the post-Cold War era is the preponderance of American power in a unipolar era which is regarded to be the least stable international power configuration compared to the previous eras (namely, the bipolar and multipolar eras). The combination of 'hard' and 'soft' power that the USA possesses creates a temptation for it to act unilaterally to serve its own national interest at the cost of weaker or smaller powers. Phillips (2008:4) argues that even when the USA acts with moderation, restraint and forbearance, it cannot be trusted by smaller states as its future behaviour is equally unpredictable.

Neorealism, on the other hand, holds that the international structure is defined by its ordering principle, which is anarchy, and by the distribution of capabilities measured by the number of great powers within the international system. The anarchic ordering principle of the international structure is decentralized, having no formal central authority and is composed of formally equal sovereign states. These states act according to the logic of self-help, and thus states seek to promote their own interest and will not subordinate their interest to another's. The structure of the international system, in particular the distribution of power, is the central analytic focus. (Korab-Karpowicz, 2011<sup>8</sup>; Jackson & Sorensen, 2007: 74-77).

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<sup>8</sup> Stanford encyclopaedia of Philosophy URL <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/realism-intl-relations/>>

Waltz (1979:118), one of the most influential neo-realists, argues that states as unitary actors seek at minimum to ensure their own survival and at most strive for universal dominance. They employ all means available to achieve their objectives, including the strengthening of their economic and military capabilities as well as forming alliances and coalitions with likeminded partners to counterbalance any common threat to their survival.

This unbalanced power that arises from the quest for dominance by powerful states triggers insecurity as states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others in order to prevent a stronger power from dominating them. This is the central notion of balance of power theory, which posits that states form alliances to protect themselves from states or coalitions whose superior resources or capabilities and pose a threat (Walt, 1987:18; Nye, 1990:158).

The USA remains hegemonic in international relations because of its military supremacy. Flesmes (2008:14) states that the USA accounts for 42% of global defence expenditure which guarantees it a dominant global power position in the years to come. However, global power shifts in recent years as a result of increasing interdependence and emergence of other powers and actors have diminished US influence in other spheres as transnational problems and challenges require co-operation of other players (Nye, 1990:154). However, American hard military power remains unrivalled.

The emergence of regional unipolarities that build coalitions to balance the superpower represents a multipolar system from the realist perspective (Flesmes, 2008:14). However, the individual or collective resource capabilities (military, economic, and cultural) of IBSA members fall short of the classical description of hard power in the realist paradigm and therefore, cannot present a formidable challenge to US power. Flesmes (2008:14) argues that because of their limited hegemonic leverage, IBSA countries employ non-military tactics and strategies to block and constrain US dominance and unilateral policies. Flesmes (2008:14) refers to these tactics as “soft balancing”, drawing from the conceptualisation of Paul (2005) who describes soft balancing as institutional strategies such as coalition formation or ententes

especially in multilateral forums to constrain US power (Paul. 2005:58). Flesmes (2008:14) adds that soft balancing also involves the strengthening of economic ties between middle-powers through sector collaboration in an effort to tilt the balance of economic power against the USA. While Flesmes (2008:14) accepts that soft balancing does not directly challenge US military preponderance, he, however, contends that questioning the legitimacy of the US' unilateral policies will increase the costs of its unilateral power by reducing the number of countries which are likely to co-operate with future US military interventions. A case in point is the glaring lack of support (especially from the South) for the US's call to form a "coalition of the willing" after its attack on Iraq in 2003.

One of the preconditions of soft balancing, as elaborated by Paul (2005:59), is that the dominant state cannot easily retaliate either because the soft balancing efforts are not explicit or do not challenge its power position in military terms. What is however instructive in Paul's (2005:59) conceptualisation is that the very countries that are employing soft balancing strategies against the powerful USA, could also pursue other areas of co-operation with the hegemon. The three IBSA countries in this regard do have strong bilateral and co-operation arrangements with the USA in various areas and at different degrees of institutionalisation. These include the India-USA "strategic partnership" on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, with similar agreements having been concluded with Brazil and South Africa in the 1990s. Other areas of co-operation are in economic development and trade (Flesmes, 2008:15).

### **2.3.2 Liberalism**

Hurrell (2006:6) argues that the complex interdependence that emerged as a result of globalisation creates an increasing demand for international institutions and new forms of global governance. He adds that institutions are important in helping to explain how new norms emerge and are diffused across the international system, and how state interests change and evolve.

In contrast to the realist paradigm that is power-centric in its view of international relations, liberalism focuses on the norms and codes of behaviour that guide inter-state relations. One of the variants of liberalism is the institutional theory of International Relations. Phillips (2008:5) states that institutionalists argue that there are rational motives that explain co-operation amongst even the most powerful states, based on rules established by international organisations. This is in contrast to realists who see the system as an anarchical one driven purely by national interests. Realists in fact regard international institutions merely as by-products of super and great power rivalry which do little to influence the behaviour of state actors (Flemes; 2007:16).

There is wide scholarly consensus that international institutionalisation has significantly contributed to interdependence in the post-Cold War era. At the same time, there is also a prevalent view that international institutions are not representative of the interests of all members and require marked restructuring and reform if their crisis of legitimacy is to be resolved (Phillips, 2008:6). These views are shared in varying degrees in many international organisations but are sharply manifested in United Nations debates, the International Financial Institutions and the World Trade Organisation. The debate at the United Nations centres on the recognition of the sovereignty of all states. The current impasse relates to the unequal distribution of power especially in the United Nations Security Council and hence the strong call for reform. A pertinent issue at the International Financial Institutions and WTO is the lack of voice of the poor countries in the decision-making structures of these institutions.

Alden and Vieira (2005:1081) assert that the focus of structural reform remains a hotly contested issue in the UN Security Council with its permanent membership and veto privileges and the Bretton Woods Institutions. They add that the weighted voting systems of the IMF and World Bank, based on the economic standing of countries, is particularly contentious for developing countries given the influence of these institutions over many of their economies. As earlier suggested, middle-powers make use of international institutions to promote their interests. Drawing from the analysis of Hurrell

(2006) on the engagement of middle-powers in international institutions, Flesher (2008:17) highlights the fact that (international) institutions provide space for middle-powers to build new coalitions in order to try and promote emerging norms in ways that correspond with their interests and to counter-balance or constrain the preferences of the most powerful country/countries. International institutions provide opportunities for all countries to voice their interests and to bid for political support in the broader market of ideas. Hurrell's (2006) analysis, therefore, suggests that intermediate states seek to defend themselves against those rules and norms that adversely affect their interests or will attempt to change dominant international norms that better suite their interests.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum therefore has adopted a global agenda that seeks to advance its positions in and through international institutions. Its members also use international summits to meet and issue joint statements on issues of common interest (Flesher; 2008:17). Most significantly, they seek common positions on key global governance issues such as the reform of the United Nations Security Council. They also seek to co-ordinate positions on key issues such as the market access negotiations at the WTO. Flesher (2008:17) argues that their activism in the Doha Round demonstrates the IBSA's ability to shape the WTO's institutional agenda in order to influence emerging international norms to their advantage. Within the context of the World Bank, IBSA countries have joined hands with China to push for co-ordinated positions on reform issues. These countries also co-ordinate positions as they engage the G-8.

IBSA countries use international institutions to resist attempts by the US to promote new norms on the use of force including pre-emptive war, the undermining of sovereignty, and the right to use force to promote regime change (Hurrell; 2006:11). IBSA countries refused to support the US led attack on Iraq in 2003. South Africa, during its tenure as non-permanent member of the UNSC, continued to challenge any attempts (perceived or real) by major powers to undermine the sovereignty of other states through mandate creep and forcing through the UNSC agenda issues that should be

discussed and decided elsewhere in UN structures, particularly the UN General Assembly where all UN members states have equal voice.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Although the characterisation of IBSA Dialogue Forum may not classically fit within traditional international relations theory of Realism, some elements of neo-realism particularly, balance of power theory as demonstrated in this chapter has helped to contextualise the emergence of IBSA and its agenda. As alliance formation is informed by national interest and driven by benefits that could be derived from it, the formation of IBSA is no different, since benefits could be derived at both national and international level due to its trilateral co-operation and global governance agendas. This behaviour of IBSA countries could, therefore, fit into the state centric theory of realism.

At the same time, the middle-power status of these countries distinguishes them because of the roles they play both at regional and multilateral levels. Scholars have also cautioned that the behaviour of middle-powers countries should always be understood within the correct context as they are not always driven by balance of power motivations unless their actions are in response to the projection of US power. In this sense, they act independently in the international system to promote norms and values using “soft power” attributes.

Building on this theoretical contextualisation, the following chapters will demonstrate to what extent the formation of IBSA Dialogue Forum and its rationale conform or not to the aforementioned theoretical arguments.



## **CHAPTER 3: THE FORMATION OF THE IBSA DIALOGUE FORUM AND FOREIGN POLICY CONVERGENCES OF IBSA COUNTRIES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the origins of IBSA, its agenda and its institutional mechanisms. It will also provide socio-economic profiles of the three countries. In the context of the theoretical considerations of the previous chapter, it will examine the individual IBSA countries' foreign policies and their strategic significance in the respective regions to which they belong.

### **3.2 Origins of the IBSA Dialogue Forum**

South Africa is widely recognised as the proponent behind of the formation of the G-7 of the South to counterbalance the G-7<sup>9</sup> Industrialised countries. The post-1994 South African foreign policy focused, amongst others, on the strengthening of South-South solidarity and the advancement of the development agenda of the South. The notion of the G-South gained momentum in the early years of the democratic South Africa and was strongly articulated by the then Deputy President Mbeki (Landsberg, 2006:5) who later was at the helm of the South African government when the Forum was launched in 2003. There was a call in the resolution of the 2002 Policy Conference of the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), for the formation of the G-7 of the South. As it will be seen later in this chapter, this call sought to position South Africa as a key player in the unfolding global environment.

Although the G-South idea was conceived to involve about seven key developing countries to mirror the G-7 at the time, only South Africa, India and Brazil came together and emerged as a concrete alliance. The significance, however, of these countries is that they are democracies and are also emerging and influential powers in their respective regions.

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<sup>9</sup> Now Group of 8 (G-8) due to the inclusion of Russia

It is also significant that the developing countries that ultimately formed this dialogue forum are building on a foundation of strong bilateral relations amongst themselves. These countries also have a history of working together on issues that are central to the development agenda of the South.

During the inaugural IBSA Summit in September 2006, South African President Mbeki asserted that IBSA was “an idea whose time has arrived....a necessary response to the current state of play in the global affairs”. He added that the purpose and objectives of IBSA were even more relevant in the context of the collapsed Doha development round of trade talks. President Mbeki argued that the collapse of the Doha trade talks brought forth the realisation that “for countries of the South to realise rapid development including fair trade...they should, first and foremost, form strong partnerships and strategic alliances that would unlock the vast resources and economic opportunities within and between their countries and regions”

John de Sousa (2008:2) argues that the formation of IBSA is unique in the sense that it is not based on an ideological consensus nor is it a straightforward alliance like the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 (G-77). The uniqueness of the IBSA Dialogue Forum is demonstrated by its general objective of influencing the international agenda without challenging the structure of the system. In the 1970s, the G-77 proposed a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which sought to replace the international economic regime advanced by the USA since World War II (Kegley and Raymond, 2007:113-114). On the other hand, IBSA countries called for the reform of global governance structures and committed themselves to join efforts to influence such reform processes (IBSA Brasilia Declaration, June 2003).

### **3.3 The IBSA Agenda**

Since its launch in July 2003, the agenda of the IBSA Dialogue Forum has crystallised around four pillars namely (i) Political Consultations; (ii) the Multilateral Co-operation agenda; (iii) the Trilateral Co-operation agenda; and (iv) the IBSA Trust Fund.

### **3.3.1 Political Consultations**

Political consultations constitute high-level engagements amongst IBSA partners during which common positions on mutual interest are formulated and agreed upon. These political consultations are held at Ministerial and at Summit levels. Ministers meet at least once a year to preside over Joint Trilateral Commissions of the Forum whose outcomes are presented to the Heads of State at separate Summit meetings. IBSA political consultations are not confined to scheduled summits and joint trilateral commissions. The dynamism of IBSA political consultations are such that IBSA Heads of State and Ministers use opportunities presented by high-level international gatherings such as the annual United Nations General Assembly for consultations. The outcomes documents of IBSA political consultations are in the form of Communiqués, Declarations and Press statements.

Consultations are also taking place amongst IBSA representatives who are based in New York and Geneva, and on the margins of international forums in order reinforce positions of mutual interest.

### **3.3.2 Multilateral co-operation**

As earlier indicated, IBSA countries share common views on a wide range of multilateral issues, with particular focus on the management of global governance. Themes concerning UN reform; International Law and multilateralism; international peace and security; globalisation; sustainable development; and climate change feature prominently in formal and informal meetings of IBSA principals. Brazil and India also carry the mantle of IBSA and the wider developing countries in the G-4 of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The G-4 of the WTO was formed after the failure of the 2003 Cancun Ministerial meeting to build consensus on the contentious issues that had stalled trade negotiations. It includes Brazil, India, the European Union, and the USA.

The IBSA countries have repeatedly showed determination to play constructive roles in global governance. They support a strong multilateral system in which a strong United Nations plays a pre-eminent role in the

promotion of international peace and security and sustainable development (IBSA Cape Town Communiqué, March 2005).

Alden and Vieira (2005:1090) argue that these countries also see the application of regional representivity as a means of legitimising their roles in global institutions. The declaration by the IBSA countries on their readiness to serve as permanent members of the expanded UN Security Council in 2007 is a case in point. South Africa initially withdrew from pronouncing its interest in a permanent UNSC seat in order to allow the Africa Group to make its determination on which two African countries should represent Africa based on the Ezulwini Consensus<sup>10</sup>. However, signals from the new Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane indicate a bolder stance. In her address to students at Rhodes University in October 2009, she affirmed her belief that South Africa should be one of the two African countries to be included as permanent members of the reformed UN Security Council<sup>11</sup>. A further interesting development was South Africa's recent campaign for another two-year tenure as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2011-2012. South Africa's candidature was endorsed by the African Union Summit in January 2010 and the election took place in October 2010 at the United Nations General Assembly. This move was seen by many analysts as the strategic positioning of South Africa in line with its readiness to join its IBSA partners (with Japan and Germany) to seek a permanent seat on a restructured UN Security Council.

### 3.3.3 Sectoral co-operation

As one of the pillars of IBSA, sectoral co-operation has experienced phenomenal growth since the formation of the Forum. Having started with a few areas of sectoral co-operation that included, *inter alia*, Trade; Defence; Information Society; and Science and Technology, there are to date 16 sectoral working groups. The IBSA areas of co-operation now include: Agriculture; Culture; Defence; Education; Energy; Environment and climate change; Health; Human Settlements; Information Society; Public

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<sup>10</sup> Ezulwini Consensus- the 2005 AU position on the reform of the UN Security Council.

<sup>11</sup> Lecture by Minister Nkoana- Mashabane at Rhodes University, Graham's Town, 20 October 2009

Administration; Revenue Administration; Science and Technology; Social Development; Trade; Transport; and Tourism.<sup>12</sup>

The leadership and co-ordination responsibilities of the IBSA sectoral working groups are shared amongst line-function experts of the three countries. An in depth analysis of the functioning of the sectoral working groups will be presented in Chapter 4.

The trilateral co-operation also extends to people-to-people forums that have equally succeeded to organise themselves. Currently, the following forums have been established: Academic forum; Parliamentary forum; Women's forum; Forum of Intergovernmental Relations and Local Governments; Business forum; Forum of Constitutional Courts; and Editors Forum<sup>13</sup>.

### **3.3.4 IBSA Trust Fund**

IBSA countries launched a Trust Fund in 2004 to support replicable and scalable development projects in poorer countries of the South, using the capabilities and expertise available in IBSA countries<sup>14</sup>. This fund was established in acknowledgement of the need for IBSA countries to contribute to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals in poorer countries. IBSA countries annually contribute 1 million US dollars each to the fund which is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York. Deputy Permanent Representatives of IBSA countries at the United Nations in New York constitute the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund. To date, the fund supports development projects in Africa, South America, Asia, and the Middle East.

So far, projects in Guinea Bissau (on the development of agriculture and livestock); Cape Verde (on the refurbishment of health-care infrastructure); and Haiti (on solid waste collection) have been completed.

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<sup>12</sup> ibsa trilateral official website..<http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/> Accessed on 16 July 2012

<sup>13</sup> ibsa trilateral official website .<http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/> Accessed on 16 July 2012

<sup>14</sup> IBSA New York Communiqué (25 September 2003)

Projects in the process of implementation are in Burundi (on infrastructure and capacity building to combat HIV/Aids); Cambodia (on empowerment of children and adolescents with special needs); Sierra Leone (on leadership development and institutional capacity building); Lao's Democratic People's Republic (on irrigation); and Palestine (on support of programme opportunities in recreational and team sport )<sup>15</sup>

### **3.4 The Institutionalisation of IBSA**

The IBSA Dialogue Forum was institutionalised as a Trilateral Commission of Foreign Ministers, supported by Focal Points in each Foreign Ministry at senior officials' level. The Ministers meet annually and the hosting rotates amongst the three countries. After a full three-year ministerial cycle, the engagement was elevated to Summit level. The first IBSA Summit was hosted by Brazil in 2006. Subsequent summits were held on the same rotational hosting basis as is the case with Foreign Ministers, who continue to hold their Ministerial meetings ahead of the summit-level meetings.

The Focal Points are responsible for co-ordinating the IBSA sectoral programmes at national-level and feed processes to the Ministerial Trilateral Commission. Although the Ministers of Foreign Affairs are the convenors of Ministerial Commissions, participation in the Commissions also includes other sector Ministers, guided by the issues on the agenda. Alden and Vieira (2005:1089) recognise the strategic importance of placing the responsibility for IBSA co-ordination with Foreign Ministries as this ensures continuity of the project without such co-ordination being affected or compromised by political changes. This was evidenced by the seamless continuity which IBSA experienced after a change of government in India in 2005 and leadership changes in South Africa in November 2008 and in the middle of 2009.

While the IBSA structured meetings are convened annually, the three countries have also developed a unique tradition (as indicated above) of engaging in consultations on the margins of multilateral meetings.

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<sup>15</sup> IBSA Trust Fund. <http://tcdc2.undp.org/IBSA/>

Coordination is also encouraged amongst IBSA representatives in multilateral organisations. At the United Nations, IBSA countries meet informally to co-ordinate positions on various issues on the UN agenda. They also serve in the Board of Directors of the IBSA Trust Fund which is administered by the UNDP as earlier pointed. In the context of the World Bank and IMF, IBSA consultations take place in conjunction with China and constitute a core group that is gradually gaining recognition in that context.

From the onset of this Dialogue Forum, the initiating leaders appeared to have a special rapport amongst them. The remarks of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the inaugural IBSA Summit in 2006 aptly capture this spirit of camaraderie. In his remarks, Prime Minister Singh expressed his honour to be in the “august company of two of the leading statesmen of our time - President Lula of Brazil and President Mbeki of South Africa.” He also referred to his two IBSA partners as friends adding that India was fortunate to count Brazil and South Africa among its closest friends. This rapport, by and large, permeated other layers of IBSA co-ordination such as: the Foreign Ministers, Focal Points, and senior officials’ levels. Such good working relationships are very important in the IBSA context where there is no structured or fixed Secretariat. This modality is, however, not sustainable as institutional mechanisms beyond just friendships should be in place in order to drive and sustain this dynamic relationship.

### **3.5 Criticism of current institutionalisation**

Since there is no fixed Secretariat that co-ordinates the IBSA work and particularly the convening of meetings, issues are left to the mercy of senior officials who meet or do not meet as they wish. This affects momentum in the advancement of work in different sectors and may have a negative impact on the overall progress of IBSA work. Even the IBSA website, whose management rotates amongst the IBSA members, is not fully updated as there is no dedicated website manager.

Inconsistencies also seem to manifest at political level where meetings are easily shifted owing to the fluidity of the co-ordination. A case in point is the

postponement of the 4<sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit, which was supposed to be held in Brazil from September 2009 to April 2010. This could be attributed to waning political will and priority attached to IBSA (given other global developments like the formation of BRICS) or merely genuine scheduling difficulty on the side of India which requested the postponement.

The lack of institutionalisation is likely to create more inconsistencies in the calendar of activities. However, if the IBSA Forum was a well institutionalised body with a Secretariat, this could promote a better organisational structure and co-ordination of activities which would make for better implementation of commitments and monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes.

### 3.6 Characterisation of IBSA countries

As can be seen in Table 1 below, the IBSA Dialogue Forum is not an agreement amongst equals. It is a forum of countries with different resources and capabilities (such as population size, military power, territorial size, and economic strength) that have come together through common purpose and shared objectives. This is to promote multilateralism and a co-operative focus in response to the challenges of globalisation.

**Table 1**

**Basic Economic, Social and Political Indicators Brazil, India, South Africa**

	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	8,547	3,287	1,223
Total population (millions) 2009	193,733,7	1,155,347,6	49,320,1
Annual population growth rate (%) 2009	0,9	1,3	1,4
Urban population (as % of total), 2010			
GDP (US\$ billions), 2010	2,087	1,729	363,7
GDP per capita (PPP US\$), 200	11,127	3,586	10,486
Private Sector merchandise trade ( % of GDP), 2009	18 17.9	30. 18.2	47.1 15.7
Economic Policy and External Debt (%of GNI) 2009	9,0 8.3	4,2 5	8,5 23.8
Public expenditure on health (as % of GDP), 2009			
Unemployment rate (2009)			



Life expectancy at birth (years), 2009	69	65	52
Mortality rate under 5 (per 1 000 live births), 2010	58	67	56
Urban development improved sanitation% access)	87%	58,0	84
2008	90%	63%	89%
Literacy rate adult total (%of people aged 15 and above (2008)			
Year women received right to vote	1934	1950	1930, 1994
Seats in parliament held by women (as % of total)	9,1	9,3	30,0

Source: World Bank <sup>16</sup>

It is also believed that the creation of IBSA was engendered by the three countries' level of trust at the foreign policy level. All IBSA countries' foreign policies reflect the core of their national interests and the need to promote economic viability especially through the promotion of international trade and social development. In this regard, the institutions that are responsible for foreign policy will themselves need the professionalism and independence in order to allow IBSA to flourish without ideological and other constraints; hence the location of IBSA co-ordination with the Foreign Ministries of the respective countries.

Against the above characterisation, a brief look at each IBSA country's foreign policy will enrich the study further.

### 3.7 South Africa's foreign policy

The history of the struggle of the majority of South Africans against the apartheid system, which was fought by the ANC and other political organisations from within and outside South Africa, as well as the peaceful transition to democracy form a backdrop of the foreign policy posture that has been driven by the ANC led government since 1994. Habib (2009:148) describes South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy as one that "moved from an isolated politically belligerent, regionally militaristic, globally defensive agenda to one that is supportive of multilateralism and involves political partnerships, regional leadership, and global engagement".

<sup>16</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/>

A key issue for the new South African government was to position itself as a member of the African community and drive an agenda of an African Renaissance while at the same time expanding bilateral relations, consolidating South-South solidarity, and promoting multilateral activism. At the onset, the ANC-led government committed itself to the “creation of a better South Africa, a better Africa, and a better world<sup>17</sup>.” This principle represents the focus of South Africa’s diplomacy whose key foreign policy priorities are: consolidation of the African Agenda; strengthening of South-South Co-operation; strengthening of North-South Dialogue; engagement in the global system of governance; and strengthening of political and economic relations. These priorities are reflected in Strategic Planning documents of the Department of Foreign Affairs, now Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) since 1994. The name change is seen as a reorientation of the country’s implementation of its foreign policy which seeks to strengthen international cooperation and partnerships.

South Africa’s material capabilities (military, economic, and diplomatic) confer on it the status of a regional-power not only in the SADC region but on the African continent at large. Before Nigeria’s rebasing exercise, South Africa was the largest economy in the continent with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 253 billion US\$, thus accounting for a third of Africa’s GDP and responsible for over 70% of the GDP of SADC. (Beri 2008:814; Alden & Vieira, 2005:1084; IMF index mundi). As of 2007, South Africa’s national defence force had 55785 active military personnel and 70 000 reservists while countries like Zimbabwe and Botswana had 29000 and 9000 respectively (Beri, 2008:815).

South Africa has also displayed heightened diplomatic activism as a peace-broker in Africa. It is also committed to the promotion of democracy and human rights in Africa and internationally, the advancement of an African Renaissance, promotion of the agenda of the South, promotion of

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<sup>17</sup> ANC’s election Manifesto, 1994 – a theme that has continued to inform the ruling party’s policies

international peace, security and stability, and the reform of the global financial and security architecture.

The first democratic president from 1994-1999, Nelson Mandela, initiated this activism. It gained greater prominence during the 9-year Presidency of Thabo Mbeki who effectively crystallised the notion of an African Renaissance and promoted it in international fora. Former President Mbeki, who was often referred to as a foreign policy activist, firmly entrenched South Africa's diplomatic reach through strategic partnerships and increased multilateral activism. This was an era where South Africa took principled stances in the multilateral arena, some of which were seen to be contradictory especially during South Africa's tenure as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council. South Africa's principled foreign policy has always been guided, amongst others, by its strong identification with the South, in particular Africa, advocacy of human rights and a fair international order. South Africa also showed a strong stance against US unilateral tendencies as demonstrated by the refusal to join the coalition of the willing during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The current Zuma Presidency is firmly building on the same foundation with a conscious emphasis on international co-operation – hence the change of name of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). The democratic institutions that were established in South Africa since 1994, such as the Constituent Assembly; National Parliament and other Parliamentary Structures; the new South African Constitution; and the establishment of the Constitutional Court, also confer legitimacy on South Africa's foreign policy posture.

South Africa has largely been criticised for not assuming its rightful position as a regional hegemon. Habib (2009:150) argues that hegemons have the necessary political and socio-economic vision to play a leadership role in their trans-national environment and the political willingness to implement and underwrite such a vision. South Africa's African Renaissance vision that translated into commitments of substantial resources to peace-building and

post-conflict reconstruction and development in the continent does accord with Habib's characterisation. However, South Africa's leadership role is sometimes short-changed by a general misperception of hegemonic leadership which is always associated with bullying or dominating tendencies. This was sometimes associated with South Africa's reluctance to act as expected in certain complex situations. There are however signs of increased confidence and boldness on the side of South Africa as demonstrated by its recent outright pronouncement of its candidature in the reformed and expanded UN Security Council. This is unlike the earlier stance of waiting on the African Group to decide on the two African countries to represent the continent. It is expected that other African competitors such as Nigeria and Egypt may challenge this posturing.

South Africa's engagement in the IBSA Dialogue forum can be seen as an assertion of its regional leadership role in the advancement of the voice and the agenda of the South in global governance structures. It is also seen as a geostrategic positioning of South Africa as the only African interlocutor in the alliance.

### **3.8 Brazil's foreign policy**

Brazil's foreign policy is largely regarded as having had some element of continuity since the 1990s. De Almeida (2007:2) argues that the structural and systematic changes that prevailed in Brazil during the same period also had a great bearing on how the Brazilian foreign policy evolved. These include the successful macroeconomic stabilisation led by President Fernando Collor de Mello between 1990 and 1992 which was carried through and consolidated by subsequent presidencies. The key foreign policy focus at that time was on regional integration with MERCOSUR and negotiations on the USA proposal for a Free Trade Area in the Americas (De Almeida, 2007:2-3).

Brazil's growing economy, its diplomatic projection, as well as its ability to attract foreign direct investment have given the country a certain weight in the region and the world as a major mineral and agricultural commodities supplier (De Almeida, 2007:3).

The stabilisation efforts also allowed for a new international projection of Brazil which saw the consolidation of relations with Latin America, the West (in particular the USA), and greater identification with developed country bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G7 (De Almeida, 2007:3; Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007:1312-1313).

Most of these gains were achieved during the Presidency of Fernando Enrique Cardoso who served an eight year term from 1995 – 2002. Cardoso is regarded as the first definitive President of the New Republic after the end of the military government in 1985. The four presidents who preceded him are regarded as transitional Presidents as none of them finished a term in office due to different circumstances, including the evolution of the country's constitution (Hammond & Filho, 2007:5-6).

Cardoso promoted a wide ranging programme of political and economic reforms and sought to integrate Brazil within international markets. He also raised the profile of Brazil and the Latin American region in international affairs and more broadly. He sought to position Brazil as a hegemon in the Latin American region whilst on the international front seeking greater co-operation and political ties with the G-7 rather than with developing world groupings (De Almeida, 2007:3).

The Presidency of Ignacio Lula da Silva (since 2003) has also built on the economic reforms of previous presidencies. During the Lula's Presidency, Brazilian foreign policy assumed an affirmative posture in world economic, political and security affairs (Hirst, 2009:3). The significant change in foreign policy focus that came with the Lula Presidency was a greater emphasis on South-South co-operation and building strategic alliances with developing countries and other emerging powers. This is a marked departure from previous presidencies that saw Brazil as a strong regional-power more oriented towards the G7 than developing countries as demonstrated by earlier presidencies. The Lula Presidency continued with a strong emphasis on political multilateralism albeit with very strong anti-hegemonist leanings,

especially following US unilateralist tendencies in the post 9/11 era. President Lula also strengthened the Brazilian lobby for a permanent seat in the reformed UNSC.

The greater emphasis on South-South co-operation focuses on efforts aimed at the integration of South America and strong identification with developing countries especially Africa. Brazil's foreign policy also placed emphasis on preferential alliances such as IBSA, BRICS, G4 (alliance of countries who sought the UNSC seat-Brazil, India, Japan, Germany), and the G20 of the WTO.

Brazil has also positioned itself as a strategic link between its IBSA partners and Latin America. India and MERCOSUR signed a framework trade agreement in January 2004, the first trade deal between MERCOSUR and an Asian country. This framework could also lead to a Free Trade Agreement (Maag, 2005:5).

South Africa and MERCOSUR also signed a framework trade agreement in December 2000. In 2003, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) joined the negotiations that led to the signing in 2005 of a SACU-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement.

### **3.9 India's foreign policy**

Since its independence in 1947, India sought to pursue an independent foreign policy. Influenced by the ideas of its first independence leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, India pursued non-alignment from the bipolar world system that emerged after World-War II, and also supported anti-colonisation.

Mukherjee (2008:4) states that the basic objectives of India's foreign policy in Nehru's time were to support newly independent countries in their struggle against colonisation as well as pursuing the policy of non-alignment. The non-alignment policy focused on promoting world peace and advancing opposition to war and threat of nuclear conflict; hence India's vehement advocacy of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

India's non-alignment policies could not always be pursued to the letter as pragmatism demanded that India seek Russia's support in its geostrategic positioning, especially as India continued to face military challenges from its Chinese and Pakistani neighbours. In this regard, India actively strengthened relations with the Soviet Union which led to negotiations of big arms deals between the two countries (Mukherjee, 2008:7-8). In defence of India's policy choices in this regard, Ganguly (2004:41) argues that India's non-alignment foreign policy did not preclude India from co-operating with superpowers but rather represented an assertion of India's right to pursue its national interest free from external domination.

India's non-alignment stance, Ganguly (2004:41) further argues, enabled India to distance itself from ideological wars between the superpowers and to play a global role disproportionate to its economic and military prowess as it championed the anti-colonisation cause; nuclear disarmament; and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. These issues also feature as permanent themes in the declarations of the NAM, where India has historically played a leading role.

India actively participated in peace brokering exercises in the region through the years. During Nehru's time, India was called upon to play the role of an honest broker in South East Asia and Korea, amongst others. Also in 1987, Vietnam sought India's assistance in brokering modalities for its withdrawal from Cambodia (Mukherjee; 2008:9-10).

On the economic front, India's foreign policy also sought to promote and protect Indian economic interests by pursuing policies of self-reliance, import substitution based on industrialization between the 1950's and 1980's, and took advantage of its non-alignment principles by sourcing capital and technology from both western countries and the Soviet Union. India also maintained an active profile in multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, the WTO, Bretton Woods Institutions, and the Commonwealth.

Compared to its IBSA partners, India has not actively pursued active regional membership. India is the largest member of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). The SAARC is more security-focused and is not regarded as a strong regional economic engine compared to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Charan, 2011:137-138), Mukherjee (2008:13) argues that India made little effort to become part of ASEAN at the right time and has only recently become a dialogue partner. India's search for a larger role in South East Asia is viewed as a strategy to prevent that region from being dominated by Chinese economic and military power (Gunguly & Pardesi, 2009:13).

India's foreign policy also had to be adjusted to be responsive to the post-Cold-War era that ushered in globalisation. Under the stewardship of Manmohan Singh, India took bold steps in reorienting India's international stature as the country seeks great power status. India worked concertedly to reshape relations with its immediate neighbours and sought strategies to resolve long-standing rivalries with China on a border dispute, as well with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

India also sought to strengthen relations with other big powers. Although India maintained good relations with Russia, it reordered its relationship with Western countries and particularly the USA to maximise its economic development (Mukherjee, 2008:12). The 2005 nuclear pact with the USA signified the country's emergence as a swing state in the global balance of power (Raca, 2006:17). India's strategic strengthening of relations with Middle Eastern countries also ensured good relations with the Arab League. Relations also continue to be consolidated with other Asian neighbours like Japan, China, and Indonesia, amongst others.

The US's unilateral tendencies have also caused India to continue to evaluate the changing nature of international alignments while it still pursues its independent foreign policy and repositions itself in the community of nations. India's joining of IBSA and BRICS therefore resonates with its foreign policy ambitions as these forums seek, amongst others, the democratisation of



global governance system in the political, economic and financial spheres. Moreover, India, Brazil, and South Africa have declared their intentions to press for permanent membership of the expanded United Nations Security Council.

### 3.10 Conclusion

The formation of IBSA has significantly improved relations among the three countries. The fact that IBSA countries had already established strong bilateral relations before the formation of IBSA, has strengthened working relations amongst them and within IBSA. Sectoral co-operation which has now been expanded to include people-to-people contact also bodes well for strengthened relations amongst IBSA countries. The sectoral co-operation agenda together with the development co-operation agenda through the IBSA Fund complement the multilateral agenda and distinguish IBSA countries as key emerging players.

There are several areas of convergence in the foreign policy areas of the IBSA countries. These are mainly on normative issues which inform the agenda of multilateral organisations and around which IBSA countries co-ordinate common positions. Table 2 below demonstrates some of the areas of convergence.

**Table 2: Commonalities in foreign policies of IBSA countries**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
Anti hegemonic tendencies	Do not support US unilateral tendencies – No support for US invasion of Iraq	Do not support US unilateral tendencies– No support for US invasion of Iraq	Do not support US unilateral tendencies – No support for US invasion of Iraq
Disarmament & Nuclear Non-proliferation	International Atomic Agency (IAEA)	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

	Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)	Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)	Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
	Conference on Disarmament (CD)	Conference on Disarmament (CD)	Conference on Disarmament (CD)
Terrorism	Support finalization of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism	Support finalization of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism	Support finalization of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism
UN Reform (UNSC seat)	Declared interest and member of G4	Declared interest and member of G4	Recent Declared interest
WTO talks	Support NAMA issues and member of G4 of WTO	Support NAMA issues and member of G4 of WTO	Support NAMA issues
Climate change	Member of BASIC group on climate change negotiations	Member of BASIC group on climate change negotiations	Member of BASIC group on climate change negotiations
Peace keeping	Support for UN peacekeeping	Support for UN peacekeeping	Support for UN peacekeeping
Middle East peace process	Support 2 state solution	Support 2 state solution	Support 2 state solution
International financial architecture	Support reform of the global financial architecture and G-20 member	Support reform of the global financial architecture and G-20 member	Support reform of the global financial architecture and G-20 member

The status of IBSA countries as middle-powers, their common and shared vision for poverty alleviation, and focus on development co-operation as well as the established industrial bases of the three countries are regarded as additional elements that bring about convergence amongst the three countries.

However, beyond like-mindedness, there are areas where IBSA countries do not have converging positions and follow independent country positions as dictated by their national interests. A case in point is India's non-accession to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and non-membership of the Nuclear Supplier's Group (NSG), a position that is contrary to the ideals of fellow IBSA partners.

While it is important to note that from its inception, IBSA countries agreed to co-operate on issues of mutual benefit, there are increasingly complex systemic issues that may in the larger scheme of things have implications for IBSA areas of convergence. Political astuteness will therefore be required to navigate such areas without compromising the good that IBSA countries have achieved collectively. These issues will be further explored in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 4: THE IBSA TRILATERAL SECTORAL CO-OPERATION AGENDA

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the architecture of the trilateral co-operation since its inception and provides a brief scan of the sectoral working groups. The chapter also examines opportunities and constraints of the sectoral working groups in order to determine the quantitative and qualitative benefits of trilateral co-operation for the three countries. It makes an assessment of the extent to which the trilateral co-operation pillar of the IBSA Dialogue Forum conforms to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the emergence IBSA discussed in chapter 2. It concludes by assessing whether the IBSA trilateral co-operation can be used to leverage the agenda of the South.

The 2003 founding Brasilia Declaration set the tone for trilateral co-operation amongst IBSA countries which has to date extended to 16 sectoral areas of co-operation. In paragraph 9 of the 2003 Brasilia Declaration, IBSA Foreign Ministers recognised that trilateral co-operation amongst the three countries was an important vehicle for achieving the promotion of social and economic development and underscored their intention to give greater momentum to co-operation among their countries.

As mentioned, IBSA trilateral co-operation is taking place amongst countries that already have established bilateral co-operation arrangements. It also takes place within a milieu of countries that are not necessarily homogeneous but that have diverse strengths and areas of excellence. This carries enormous potential for mutual enrichment and multiple benefits for the three countries since the trilateral co-operation complements existing sound bilateral relations between these countries. At the same time, the differentiation of the respective strengths of individual IBSA countries may also require careful management for mutual maximisation of the benefits of trilateral co-operation.

## 4.2 The Scope of the IBSA Trilateral Co-operation Agenda

The gradual but significant growth in the sectoral areas of co-operation has played a key role in maintaining the momentum of engagement amongst the three countries at a technical level.

While the initial areas of sectoral co-operation were mooted at the inception of IBSA namely: Trade; Defence; Information Society; and Science and Technology<sup>18</sup>, the identification of subsequent areas of co-operation were proposed through the focal points of the respective IBSA countries. The focal points recommend the establishment of such sectoral working groups to the Ministers who then task the respective line Departments of their countries to work out the necessary modalities for the establishment of the working groups. The negotiation of modalities is subjected to intense consultations amongst the three countries until all countries find common ground. This culminates in the signing of a trilateral co-operation agreement of some sort, with Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) being the most common but not exclusive agreements signed. Most agreements are accompanied by action plans that inform and guide the implementation of the co-operation agreement.

The Trilateral Ministerial Meetings mainly but not exclusively serve to review progress of the functioning of sectoral working groups and address constraints where necessary. Table 1 below shows the progression of the sectoral working groups and the agreements signed hitherto<sup>19</sup>.

**Table1. The establishment of Sectoral Working Groups**

Sectoral working Group	Date of Initiation	Type of Agreement and Date of signature
Agriculture	March 2005	MoU on co-operation in Agriculture and Allied Fields - <b>September 2006</b>
Culture	March 2005	MoU Cultural Co-operation - <b>October 2007</b>
Defence	March 2004	
Education	March 2004	MoU on co-operation in the field of Higher Education - <b>October 2007</b>
Energy	March 2004	MoU on the establishment of a trilateral task team on Biofuels - <b>September 2006</b>
		MoU on co-operation in Wind Resources - <b>October 2007</b>

<sup>18</sup> Brasilia Declaration, June 2003

<sup>19</sup> Data based on communiques of IBSA Ministerial Joint Commissions and Summits (2003 -2011)

		MoU on co-operation in the area of Solar Energy – <b>April 2010</b>
Environment and Climate Change	July 2007	MoU on co-operation in the field Environment - <b>October 2008</b>
Health	March 2004	MoU on co-operation in the field of Health and Medicine - <b>October 2007</b>
Human Settlements	July 2007	MoU on co-operation in the field of Human Settlements and Development - <b>October 2008</b>
Information Society	March 2004	IBSA Framework for Co-operation on Information Society - <b>March 2006</b>
Public Administration and Governance	September 2006	MoU on co-operation in the field of Public Administration - <b>October 2007</b>
Revenue Administration	July 2006	Agreement on Customs and Tax Administration Co-operation - <b>October 2007</b>
		MoU on Exchange of Tax Information - <b>2011 Ministerial</b>
Science and Technology	March 2004	MoU on co-operation in Science and Technology and Innovation - <b>April 2010</b>
Social Development	March 2006	MoU on co-operation in the field of Social Issues - <b>October 2007</b>
Trade and Investment	March 2004	Action Plan on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment - <b>March 2006</b>
		MoU on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment - <b>October 2008</b>
Transport (Civil aviation & shipping)	March 2004	IBSA Trilateral Agreement Concerning Shipping and Other Maritime Related Matters - <b>September 2006</b>
		Five Year Action Plan for Maritime Transport- <b>October 2008</b>
		Trilateral MoU on Air Services - <b>July 2005</b>
		Five Year Action Plan for Civil Aviation - <b>October 2008</b>
Tourism	March 2004	Tripartite Agreement on Tourism - <b>October 2008</b>

### 4.3 Overview of IBSA sectoral working groups – opportunities and constraints

As can be seen from Table 1 above, the sectoral working groups were initiated at different stages since the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum. However, the various sectoral working groups have not maintained the same momentum and vibrancy. It should also be understood that some sectors may yield benefits in a short-term and some in a long- term. It may therefore be necessary for IBSA countries to take advantage of low hanging fruit in this trilateral co-operation while at the same time nurturing the sectors that stand to benefit the countries in the long-term.

#### 4.3.1 Working Group on Agriculture

The working group on Agriculture was established in 2005 to highlight common concerns in the agriculture sector at global level, as well as crafting modes of future co-operation in agriculture amongst IBSA countries. A Memorandum of

Understanding on co-operation in Agriculture and Allied fields was concluded in 2006<sup>20</sup>. Specific areas of co-operation were identified as follows: research and capacity building; trade in agriculture including sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues; rural development and poverty alleviation; and other allied areas. In 2007, the working group established thematic sub-groups and the leadership of these were allocated to each country based on their comparative advantages and strengths. South Africa led the sub-groups on sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues, agro-processing and agri-business. India led the sub-groups on policy issues including poverty alleviation, and research capacity building. Brazil led the sub-groups on animal health and animal production, and biofuels in the context of Agriculture<sup>21</sup>. The three countries also embarked on a collaborative study that led to the finalisation of a paper called “The Future of Agriculture Co-operation in IBSA” in 2009<sup>22</sup>.

### Opportunities

Co-operation in Agriculture takes place against a background of global concerns about food insecurity especially as the 2015 target for United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fast approaches. The three countries share similar socio-economic challenges most of which are reflected in the MDGs. IBSA countries have developed substantial capabilities and also possess different strengths in the agriculture sector. There is therefore opportunity for synergising the complementarities of these countries in order to maximise impact on socio-economic development, building on the areas of mutual co-operation identified in the MoU.

### Constraints

Following the establishment of the relevant frameworks, there seems to be no recorded progress, if any, on the work of this working group. Article 5 of the MoU provides for the drawing up of a Plan of Action for undertaking activities, as well as a review of implementation. Beyond reports of decisions to undertake collaborative activities in various fields, there is little evidence of tangible progress in this area of great potential benefit to these countries and their respective regions.

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<sup>20</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit Declaration (2006)

<sup>21</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> IBSA Ministerial Communique New Delhi 2007

<sup>22</sup> IBSA Dialogue Forum: 6<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Commission Meeting, Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

### **4.3.2 Working Group on Culture**

The working group was established in 2005 with the objective of, amongst others, promoting cultural exchanges and expertise amongst the three countries. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Co-operation was concluded in 2007. Areas of co-operation include: research, development, education and training in arts and culture; cultural heritage promotion; dialogue through conferences and workshops; and promotion of cultural diversity through exchanges of best practices<sup>23</sup>.

#### Opportunities

IBSA countries possess rich and diverse cultures and the areas of co-operation identified in the MoU. If implemented, these promise an enriched people-to-people contact which will raise awareness on the history and culture of these multicultural societies. There are also prospects of economic development which would accrue from intra-IBSA cultural tourism.

#### Constraints

Despite a very rich programme proposed in the MoU, as well as pronouncements in Ministerial declarations of work to be done, there appears to be no documentation of achievements or activities of this working group. The 2009 IBSA Ministerial Meeting noted the proposed activities of the working group which included an IBSA film festival hosted by India, a seminar on either cultural industries or cultural tourism hosted by South Africa in 2010; and a Seminar on conservation of architectonic and urbanistic heritage hosted by Brazil in 2009. There is no documentation, in the public domain, of whether these activities have materialised or not.

### **4.3.3 Working Group on Defence**

The working group was established at the inception of IBSA in 2003. The 2004 New Delhi Plan of Action<sup>24</sup> outlines potential areas of co-operation which include defence production; co-development, trade and joint marketing; Research and Development; training and military personnel exchanges.

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<sup>23</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> IBSA Ministerial Communique New Delhi 2007

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.dfa.gov.za/events/2004/ibsa0308.htm>



Despite the absence of a framework agreement on defence, the three countries agreed on participating in joint naval military exercises named IBSAMAR (IBSA Maritime Exercise) which have become a flagship programme of IBSA defence co-operation. The first naval exercise (IBSAMAR I) took place in 2008 under the co-ordination of South Africa, while the second and third naval exercises took place in 2010 and 2012 under the co-ordination of India and Brazil respectively<sup>25</sup>. In 2009, the working group agreed to organise joint events in Science and Technology for Defence; Defence Material Production; Peace Operations; and Special Forces in the years 2009/2010. They also agreed to exchange information in the areas of piracy; counter-terrorism and cybernetic security; as well as exchange experiences in the areas of Joint Deployment of Armed Forces Doctrine, Structure and Doctrine of Command and Control of the Armed Forces and Centralized Procurement of Defense Material<sup>26</sup>.

#### Opportunities

IBSA countries boast of well-developed defence industries with diverse areas of excellence which offer a wide range of opportunities for co-operation taking into account each country's comparative strength and expertise. The strengthening of defence co-operation amongst IBSA countries stand to boost and strengthen these countries' regional-power status and could, if well-developed and sustained, have a greater impact on the global peace and security agenda.

#### Constraints

The work of the working group of Defence did not move with the same momentum as other working groups despite the fact that Defence was among the initial areas of co-operation identified at the inception of IBSA. Notwithstanding an ambitious programme laid out in the 2004 New Delhi Plan of Action, most of it has only remained on paper without operationalisation. IBSA Ministerial Communiques and Summit documents have repeatedly called upon the Defence Ministers to meet in order to advance co-operation in this field.

### **4.3.4 Working Group on Education**

The working group was established in 2004. Although not much progress was registered in IBSA outcome documents about this working group since 2004, the

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<sup>25</sup> IBSAMAR is presumed to be emanating from the unpublished 2004 Plan of Action, an Annexure of the New Delhi Agenda for Co-operation

<sup>26</sup> India-Brazil- South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

2007 IBSA Summit saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the area of Higher Education and welcomed the co-operation that the Diplomatic Institutes of the three countries have established<sup>27</sup>. The academic areas of co-operation identified in the MoU include engineering, computer science, mathematics, biotechnology, agriculture and livestock, sustainable development, social transformation and empowerment, and higher education. In 2008, the three countries committed to contribute \$50 000 each for the operationalisation of the MoU<sup>28</sup>. In 2009, the three countries identified thematic areas of co-operation and allocated roles amongst themselves to lead and facilitate exchange programmes, and also agreed on the formulation of draft guidelines for the IBSA Exchange Programme<sup>29</sup>. In 2010, the South African National Research Foundation (SANRF) in collaboration with Higher Education South Africa (HESA) offered scholarships to researchers of IBSA countries as part of the IBSA co-operation Agreement<sup>30</sup>.

### Opportunities

The strengthening of co-operation in the field of education bodes well for IBSA countries as they seek a variety of skills and qualifications in order to grow their economies and most importantly for the respective countries' socio-economic development. The potential for learning from each other's expertise is enormous as these countries possess diverse strengths in the field of education. For the three countries, co-operation in education presents a great opportunity for sharing best practices, transferring of skills and expertise and also expanding the countries' pool of intellectuals and academics.

### Constraints

The working group has identified a rich and ambitious co-operation programme which requires a time-bound Plan of Action in order to guide and advance its work. Given that the scope of this working group is heavily skewed towards Higher Education, there is a risk that the scope of this working group could be conflated with that of the Academic Forum. A well-structured Plan of Action would need to be crafted in order to obviate this risk.

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<sup>27</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>28</sup> Somerset West Ministerial Communique (IBSA) 11 May 2008

<sup>29</sup> India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum Ministerial Communique, 8 March 2009

<sup>30</sup> The National Research Foundation (NRF) offers HESA/IBSA Trilateral co-operation in the field of Higher Education for the year 2010. In <http://www.scholarship-programmes.org/scholarship/south-africa-2010-programmes/> Accessed October 2013

Language difference also inhibit communications: two IBSA countries, India and South Africa are English speaking while Brazil's national language is Portuguese.

#### 4.3.5 Working Group on Energy

This working group was established in 2004 and identified the following areas for mutual co-operation: non-conventional energy; bio-diesel energy; hydrogen energy and fuel cells; exchange of experience in generation, transmission and distribution of power; as well as energy conservation and reform<sup>31</sup>. Three Memoranda of Understanding on Biofuels; Wind Resources; and Co-operation in Solar Energy were concluded in 2006<sup>32</sup>, 2007<sup>33</sup>, and 2010<sup>34</sup>, respectively. The MoUs have been followed by active consultations amongst the three countries which included exchange of information and experiences as well as seminars. A trilateral task team on biofuels was established in 2008<sup>35</sup>.

#### Opportunities

Energy co-operation is another strategic sector for IBSA countries as high energy prices are seriously affecting the cost of doing business, resulting in poor people and energy-dependent sectors such as farming and transportation being severely affected. Energy security has therefore become very essential for sustainable socio-economic development as these countries co-operate in this sector and explore various energy mixes. Key areas of focus in this co-operation include non-conventional energy, bio-diesel energy, hydrogen energy, and fuel cells, exchange of experience in generation, transmission and distribution of power as well as energy conservation and reform<sup>36</sup>. Brazil is a world-class leader in ethanol production; India is the world's largest producer of sugar cane (a source of ethanol); and South Africa is a leading African country in the development of biofuels (Singh, 2012:6-7). The capabilities and complementarities that exist amongst IBSA countries therefore present an opportunity for increased co-operation which will translate into economic development in these countries.

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<sup>31</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

<sup>32</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit Meeting: Joint Declaration, 13 September 2006

<sup>33</sup> India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>34</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Fourth Summit of Heads of State/Government Brasilia Declaration, 15 April 2010

<sup>35</sup> Somerset West Ministerial Communique (IBSA) 11 May 2008

<sup>36</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

### Constraints

The vastness and importance of this sector has necessitated the conclusion of three different Memoranda of Understanding. Whilst the conclusion of MoUs is a positive achievement and a good point of departure, there is a risk of non-implementation due to some glaring gaps in the MoUs. The three MoUs are crafted in a very minimalistic way and they lack provisions that talk to important implementation modalities. The MoU on Biofuels<sup>37</sup>, for example, only identifies the areas of focus and the lead Departments in respective countries without mentioning any implementation modalities. The MoUs on Wind Resources and Solar Energy only talk to the areas of co-operation<sup>38</sup>. Paragraph 3 of the MoU on Solar Energy provides for the designation of implementing parties within two months of the signing of the MoU<sup>39</sup> but there is no record of the designation of the implementing parties in subsequent IBSA outcome documents.

#### **4.3.6 Working Group on Environment and Climate Change**

The working group was established in 2007 and a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of Environment was signed in 2008. The scope of the MoU, whose purpose is to promote common and beneficial partnership among the parties in the field of environment, spans global environmental issues and trilateral co-operation<sup>40</sup>. Key thematic areas for trilateral co-operation are Climate Change, Biodiversity, Desertification, and Forestry. In addition to the exchange of information and expertise amongst themselves, IBSA countries also identified opportunities for capacity-building on the Clean Development Mechanism in third countries<sup>41</sup>.

### Opportunities

IBSA countries are leading members of a group of emerging economies within the G-77 and China negotiating bloc. Given the high stakes in environment and climate change debates, the working group provides an important opportunity for the co-ordination of positions and negotiating strategies ahead of multilateral meetings. The working group held consultations on four thematic clusters in preparation for

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<sup>37</sup> MoU on establishing a trilateral task team on Biofuels. [http://ibsa.nic.in/mou\\_environment.htm](http://ibsa.nic.in/mou_environment.htm). Accessed on 22/11/2012

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> MoU on co-operation in the field of Environment and Climate Change. . [http://ibsa.nic.in/mou\\_environment.htm](http://ibsa.nic.in/mou_environment.htm). Accessed on 22/11/2012

<sup>41</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development<sup>42</sup>. Opportunities remain for trilateral co-operation on Research and Development and sharing of expertise on the use of alternative sources of energy, biodiversity, energy security and reduction of greenhouse emissions.

### Constraints

The scope of the working group is heavily skewed towards multilateral negotiations with little focus on trilateral co-operation. As a consequence, it would be difficult to gauge the progress of this working group due to the protracted nature of environment and climate change debates. The areas of trilateral co-operation identified for this working group also overlap to some extent with the scope of the working groups on energy, and science and technology.

### **4.3.7 Working Group on Health**

The working group was established in 2003 at the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum. In 2006, the working group developed an IBSA Implementation Plan on Health focusing on public health laboratories; health surveillance; traditional medicine; and sanitary control regulations. They also identified modalities for the exchange of experiences and exploring solutions to meet health needs<sup>43</sup>. A Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of Health and Medicines was concluded and signed during the IBSA Summit in 2007<sup>44</sup>. The MoU focuses on collaboration on research and development of diagnostic tools for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, drugs and vaccines, in line with a commitment made by IBSA Heads of State in 2006. The 2009 Joint Commission recognized the commitment of resources by the three countries for joint research projects in identified areas, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and indigenous knowledge<sup>45</sup>.

### Opportunities

IBSA countries share similar challenges in the health sector and have also been in the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases. The vast research and development capabilities of these countries place them at the cutting edge of delivering improved health services that reach beyond their regions and continents. It is also encouraging to

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<sup>42</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

<sup>43</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit Meeting: Joint Declaration, 13 September 2006

<sup>44</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>45</sup> India-Brazil- South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

note the commitment of resources made by IBSA countries for joint research projects in identified areas such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and indigenous knowledge.

### Constraints

The working group on health is one of the working groups that struggled to kick off since its establishment in 2004 despite the critical importance that the three countries attach to co-operation in this sector. It is only in 2006 that a report confirmed the convening of the health working group<sup>46</sup>, despite a commitment during the 2005 Joint Commission that the health working group as well as the Health Ministers would meet the same year<sup>47</sup>. There is no record of the IBSA Health Ministers meeting despite several calls by the Foreign Ministers as well as IBSA Heads of States for Health Ministers to meet since 2005.

### **4.3.8 Working Group on Human Settlements and Development**

The working group on Human Settlements was established in 2007 and a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of Human Settlements and Development was signed in 2008. The working group exchanged information on national policies on housing and urbanisation of hazardous human settlements among low-income populations in the three countries. The working group agreed, amongst others, to arrange technical visits to projects under implementation in each of the three countries for comparison and monitoring. The first visit was made to the site of a programme of urbanization with regard to slums in Manginhos and Alemão in Rio de Janeiro on July 15, 2009.

### Opportunities

IBSA countries share a common interest in the development and implementation of more effective policies and programmes aimed at addressing the challenges of sustainable human settlements. The working group offers a unique South-South platform for sharing of information and best practices on national policies and programmes. The MoU provides for joint co-operation with international forums in meeting the objectives of the MoU. In this regard, the Cities Alliance and World

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<sup>46</sup> Rio de Janeiro Ministerial Communiqué : India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum (30 March 2006)

<sup>47</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communiqué, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

Bank Institute have partnered with the working group since 2009 by providing technical and financial assistance<sup>48</sup>.

### Constraints

The work of the working group still needs to be properly concretised. Article 3 (d) of the MoU provides for an annual work programme that will guide its implementation<sup>49</sup>. While there is a record of some contact visits and seminars, there is no mention of the existence of a work programme. The absence of a clear work programme for the MoU presents a risk of losing momentum in the work and also neglecting some key areas of focus.

### **4.3.9 Working Group on Information Society**

The working group on Information Society is one of the few working groups that have been active since the inception of IBSA. This sector was also identified in the founding Brasilia Declaration. Co-operation has been developed in several areas including the exchange of information and best practices on e-governance and Information Society Development Plans<sup>50</sup>. In 2006, the working group developed an “IBSA Framework for Co-operation on Information Society” which was accompanied by a Joint Action programme for 2006-2007<sup>51</sup>. The working group also developed the IBSA website ([www.ibsa-trilateral.org](http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org)) which was launched during the first IBSA Summit in 2006.

Positive progress in the working group was registered by the IBSA Trilateral Commission in 2008, noting the targets set and the modalities developed for the implementation of the plan of action which includes the IBSA e-Readiness Report, Digital Awards, and e-Government Standards Seminar<sup>52</sup>. In 2009, the working group identified some areas for enhanced co-operation, including civil identification and other e-government applications; network infrastructure and data centres; co-operation through a consortium to strengthen open-source software; development of a framework based on open-source; and evaluation

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/3427>. Accessed on 1 December 2012

<sup>49</sup> MoU on co-operation in the field of Human Settlements and Development: [http://ibsa.nic.in/mou\\_human\\_settlement.htm](http://ibsa.nic.in/mou_human_settlement.htm). Accessed on 1 December 2012

<sup>50</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

<sup>51</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

<sup>52</sup> Somerset West Ministerial Communique (IBSA) 11 May 2008

methodology<sup>53</sup>. The three countries also sought to co-operate on ICT infrastructure development as South Africa was preparing to host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup and India the Commonwealth Games in the same year<sup>54</sup>.

### Opportunities

Information Technologies have a strategic importance for IBSA countries due to their significance and impact in the implementation of several government programmes. There is another equally important aspect of bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries. Co-operation on Information Society focuses on bridging the digital divide and ensuring increase in access and inclusion of societies in information technologies. Although this is a long-term project due to its scope and the need for it to be streamlined in all government services, the co-operation had practical manifestations in the launch of the IBSA website project as well as the establishment of the IBSA Digital Awards aimed at recognising digital inclusion projects in IBSA countries.

### Constraints

The launch of the IBSA website was one of the flagship projects of the working group which also successfully profiled the IBSA Dialogue Forum. The management of the website, however, appears to be *ad hoc* and information is not consistently available as the webmaster roles change from one country to another. If well managed, the IBSA website could go a long way in providing an electronic public diplomacy function for the Forum and thereby close the information gap that characterises the IBSA Dialogue Forum currently.

#### **4.3.10 Working Group on Public Administration and Governance**

The working group was established in 2006 and a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of Public Administration was signed in 2007. The areas of co-operation identified include: e-governance; integrated monitoring and evaluation; human resources development; citizens oriented service delivery; anti-corruption and ethics; as well as accountability and transparency. The working group has worked actively on the implementation of the MoU which culminated in the development of an IBSA Framework on Public

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<sup>53</sup> India-Brazil- South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

<sup>54</sup> India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007



Administration and the Launch of a virtual centre of Excellence in Public Administration<sup>55</sup> in 2009. The 2009 Joint Commission also agreed to set up a web-based portal to create a knowledge base for sharing IBSA experiences and best practices in the field of public administration and development. Seminars have also been hosted by IBSA countries on agreed and pertinent topics.

### Opportunities

Co-operation on Public Administration and Governance is one of the strategic areas of co-operation that has great potential for improving the effectiveness of the governments' service delivery and most importantly, the improvement of livelihoods of citizens of the three countries. It is also a good platform for South-South exchanges and learning. The virtual centre of excellence is already attracting feedback from other developing countries who are finding the exchanges on this platform beneficial in their domestic environments.

### Constraints

At this stage of activity of the working group, there are no glaring limitations. However, as in all the Agreements, the litmus test for their effectiveness is implementability and sustainability of programmes.

#### **4.3.11 Working Group on Revenue Administration**

The working group was established in 2006 and an Agreement on Customs and Tax Administration Co-operation was concluded and signed in 2007<sup>56</sup>. Areas of co-operation identified in the Agreement include: facilitation of legitimate trade and investment; combating commercial fraud, smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering, and other international trade activities; curbing abusive tax avoidance transactions; and strengthening modernisation through capacity building<sup>57</sup> and exchange of expertise. In 2008, the working group agreed to launch a centre for exchange of tax information amongst the three countries<sup>58</sup>. In 2011, the three countries launched a web-based IBSA Centre for Exchange of Tax Information (IBSA CETI) and a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard was signed<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> India-Brazil- South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

<sup>56</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>57</sup> MoU on Customs and Tax Administration. [http://ibsa.nic.inc/revenue\\_administration\\_agreement.htm](http://ibsa.nic.inc/revenue_administration_agreement.htm)

<sup>58</sup> Somerset West Ministerial Communique (IBSA) 11 May 2008

<sup>59</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Seventh Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique., 8 March 2011

### Opportunities

Co-operation on Customs and Tax Administration among IBSA countries is critical and it also highlights the importance of growing economic and commercial links between these countries. The work of this working group has important synergies with the work of the working group on Trade and Investment, especially in the consideration of the India-MERCOSUR-SACU Trilateral Free Trade Agreement.

### Constraints

There is no substantive progress that appears to have been achieved by the working group since its inception, except for the signing of the two Memoranda of Understanding.

#### **4.3.12 Working Group on Science and Technology**

Science and Technology is amongst the areas of co-operation that were identified at the inception of IBSA. The working group has had dynamic engagements and positive progress has been registered in outcomes of IBSA Joint Commissions and Summits. Initial areas of co-operation included: health, biotechnology, nano sciences, and oceanography; and these were supported by time-bound work programmes<sup>60</sup>. Additional areas of co-operation were identified such as the Antarctic Research in Science and Technology sector<sup>61</sup> and research on sensors; solar cells; catalysis; malaria and tuberculosis diagnosis; and water treatment<sup>62</sup>. In support of their activities in this sector, the three countries created a seed fund of US\$ 1 million in each country for collaborative activities<sup>63</sup>. A memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology and Solar Energy was concluded and signed in 2010<sup>64</sup>.

### Opportunities

Science and Technology co-operation is another very important strategic sector for IBSA countries as its scope straddles several IBSA sectors including, *inter alia*, health (biotechnology, nanotechnology, malaria and tuberculosis diagnosis); climate and environment (water treatment, Antarctic research, oceanography);

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<sup>60</sup> Rio de Janeiro Ministerial Communique : India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum (30 March 2006)

<sup>61</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>62</sup> Somerset West Ministerial Communique (IBSA) 11 May 2008

<sup>63</sup> New Delhi Ministerial Communique (2007) India-Brazil-South Africa Forum

<sup>64</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Fourth Summit of Heads of State/Government Brasilia Declaration, 15 April 2010

energy (solar energy, biofuels); defence (defence technology), agriculture (animal health), and education (collaboration with higher Institutions of learning). It is important that this sector be harnessed and that the multidisciplinary capabilities of IBSA are synergised for maximum impact.

### Constraints

There are no glaring limitations that can be identified in the work of the working group. The multidisciplinary nature of its scope may become the Achilles heel of this working group as its progress may be retarded by sectors that cannot cope with the momentum of its work.

### **4.3.13 Working Group on Social Development**

The working group was set up in 2006 following an International Seminar on Economic and Social Equity held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 3-4 August 2005. A Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation on Social Issues was subsequently signed during the 2007 IBSA Summit. Areas of mutual co-operation include poverty eradication; social security; social policy; monitoring and evaluation; institutional capacity building; microfinance; and co-operation in multilateral forums. During the 6<sup>th</sup> IBSA Joint Commission, it was announced that the working group had drawn up the implementation plan of the MOU and that it had agreed to finalise an IBSA Development Strategy. The three countries also agreed to produce a matrix of social policies, programmes, and projects of their countries in order to identify possibilities for co-operation<sup>65</sup>. The working group finalised and adopted a paper entitled “IBSA Social Developments Strategies” during the 4<sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit in 2010<sup>66</sup>.

### Opportunities

IBSA countries share similar challenges in the social development arena and they have developed various policies and programmes to address the challenges even as they strive towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Co-operation in this field presents an opportunity for learning from the expertise and best practices of the three countries.

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<sup>65</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> IBSA Ministerial Communique- Brasilia 2009

<sup>66</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Fourth Summit of Heads of State/Government Brasilia Declaration, 15 April 2010

### Constraints

The working group has not kept momentum in driving this important collaboration. Four years after its establishment, the working group has only finalised a paper on IBSA Social Development Strategies and there appears to be no sense of where the co-operation is being taken after the conclusion of the paper. The decision to draw up a matrix in order to identify possibilities of co-operation has not yet materialised, or at least has not been reported on.

#### **4.3.14 Working Group on Tourism**

Co-operation in the tourism sector is recognised as an important contribution to economic development and the enhancement of people-to-people contact. The three countries committed to explore the possibility of a special visa dispensation for IBSA countries. A Tripartite Agreement on Tourism was signed in 2008<sup>67</sup>. The three countries exchanged information and expertise through holding of seminars on topics of mutual interest such as beach tourism; national parks and eco-tourism; and rural tourism.

### Opportunities

The IBSA trilateral co-operation in the field tourism provides an enabling environment for economic development and enhanced people-to-people contact. The potential for tourism between the three countries is huge and the sector has the ability to make an important contribution to job creation and economic development.

### Constraints

There has been overall tardiness in the work of this working group despite the low-hanging fruit that this co-operation stands to reap. The 2005 Joint Commission proposed a tourism visa of IBSA countries<sup>68</sup>. No progress has been registered yet on this important issue nor has there been progress registered on the overall work of the working group.

#### **4.3.15 Working Group on Trade and Investment**

The Trade and Investment sector was identified at the inception of IBSA. In 2005, IBSA countries decided to promote co-ordination and co-operation on

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

<sup>68</sup> IBSA Ministers recommended that competent authorities should examine possible visa dispensation for IBSA countries

convergences of Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) amongst the three countries; conduct joint studies and research on trade related matters; and also undertook to conduct IBSA seminars on trade and investment their respective countries as well as in key developing markets<sup>69</sup>. In the same year, the IBSA Business Council was launched, which was envisaged to have an active relationship with the working group and collaborate closely in areas such as Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs)<sup>70</sup>.

An IBSA Action Plan on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment was signed in 2006<sup>71</sup>. The 2007 Summit reaffirmed a commitment to an envisaged India-MERCOSUR-SACU Trilateral Free Trade Area (T-FTA), and also called for an intra-IBSA trade target of US\$ 15 billion by 2010<sup>72</sup>. A Memorandum of Understanding on Trade Facilitation for Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment was signed during the 2008 IBSA Summit<sup>73</sup>. This was followed by the development of an implementation plan and a discussion of a Joint Action Plan on Co-operation in the field of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)<sup>74</sup>. A decision was taken to incorporate the Tri-Nations Summit on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) jointly organised by the respective agencies of the three countries, into the agenda of IBSA Summits<sup>75</sup>.

### Opportunities

Intra-IBSA trade is a very important sector in the trilateral co-operation which requires the necessary attention and nurturing in order to spur growth not only in individual countries but for the benefit of the regions of IBSA countries. The importance of intra-IBSA trade has been highlighted further by the structural shifts in the post-2008 economic crisis era, which have seen emerging economies as new sources of global growth, trade and investment.

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<sup>69</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*

<sup>71</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit Meeting: Joint Declaration, 13 September 2006

<sup>72</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum: Second Summit of Heads of State/Government Tshwane Declaration, 17 October 2007

<sup>73</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Third Summit of Heads of State/Government New Delhi Declaration, 15 October 2008

<sup>74</sup> India-Brazil- South Africa Dialogue Forum: Sixth Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 1 September 2009

<sup>75</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Seventh Trilateral Commission Meeting Ministerial Communique, 8 March 2011

A study by Puri (2007:14) from UNCTAD aptly refers to IBSA as a “key formation in the new geography for international trade in which the role of the South has become strong on a North – as well as South-South basis”. The study further shows that intra-IBSA trade grew from US\$ 1.5 billion in 2004 to US\$ 16.2 billion in 2010, with India contributing 44%, Brazil 31% and South Africa 25%. The 2010 growth surpassed the US\$ 15billion target that was set by the IBSA Summit in 2008<sup>76</sup>. This is significant as IBSA trade grew despite the economic crisis that gripped the developed world starting in the USA in 2008 and later hitting Europe. Encouraged by this positive growth, the IBSA Heads of State have set a target of US\$25billion of combined IBSA trade for the year 2015<sup>77</sup>.

As the three countries are working towards a trilateral free trade agreement (FTA), the IBSA-FTA would provide important market access opportunities for India into MERCOSUR and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU); for Brazil into SACU and India; and for South Africa into MERCOSUR and India. The success of the IBSA-FTA would not only be a demonstration of South-South co-operation but each IBSA country could act as a hub for further growth and development in their respective continents (Puri,2007:45).

#### Constraints

Despite the opportunities that hold for intra-IBSA trade, there remain trade imbalances between the countries with South Africa negatively affected due to the smaller size of its economy compared to its IBSA partners. Progress in the negotiation of the IBSA-FTA has been slow and until this FTA is realised, there will be little tangible achievements and benefits for IBSA regions.

#### **4.3.16 Working Group on Transport**

From the onset of IBSA, the transport sector was recognised as a key sector in the advancement of trade and tourism amongst the three countries and their respective regions. The IBSA authorities therefore took an interest in ensuring that respective memoranda of understanding in aviation and maritime and concomitant time-bound plans of action were finalised. A Memorandum of

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<sup>76</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Third Summit of Heads of State/Government New Delhi Declaration, 15 October 2008

<sup>77</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government Tshwane Declaration, 18 October 2011

Understanding on Civil Aviation was concluded and signed in 2005<sup>78</sup> whilst the one on Maritime Transport was concluded and signed in 2006<sup>79</sup>. In 2008, Five Year Action Plans for the implementation of the MoUs on Civil Aviation and on Maritime Transport were finalised<sup>80</sup>. The 5 year Plans of Action (2008-2013) focus on exchange of expertise, skills, and capacity-building in the relevant areas.

### Opportunities

The prospects of increased growth in trade, investment, and economic development amongst IBSA countries hinge on improved transport links amongst these countries. Air transport and shipping are the only modes of transportation that connect these countries for transportation of commercial goods and the movement of people as well.

In terms of trade, maritime transport accounts for 95 % of transportation while the remaining 5% is done by air cargo (CNI, 2008:25, 32). Improved shipping and air links are critical for the increase of intra-IBSA trade as well as inter-regional trade and economic development. The emphasis by IBSA Heads of State on ensuring that the maritime and aviation agreements are implemented is therefore informed by the great potential that this sector can unlock in this regard. Co-operation in customs and tax administration is also a key aspect in support of improved trade relations among IBSA countries.

### Constraints

Weak transportation links between the countries have been highlighted as a risk that can compromise any efforts to enhance co-operation in trade, tourism, and overall people-to- people contact not only amongst IBSA countries but also their respective regions. Weak linkages either through air-links or maritime connections result in high transport costs for trade, business, and tourism. Studies show that high international freight costs can affect foreign trade and also have a direct bearing on other costs such as custom tariffs and exchange rates (CNI, 2008:24).

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<sup>78</sup> Cape Town Ministerial Communique, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, March 2005

<sup>79</sup> Rio de Janeiro Ministerial Communique : India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum (30 March 2006)

<sup>80</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum Third Summit of Heads of State/Government New Delhi Declaration 15 October 2008

#### **4.4 Assessment of the operational and technical constraints of the IBSA sectoral working groups**

Some of the constraints of the sectoral working groups can be largely attributed to the current fluid institutionalisation of the IBSA Dialogue Forum as elaborated in Chapter 3. The absence of a fixed Secretariat that serves as a co-ordinating mechanism for IBSA activities at all levels (sectoral, ministerial, and summit levels), as well as fulfilling the critical role of monitoring and evaluation of outcomes has a bearing on the loss of momentum in different IBSA sectors. The IBSA Focal Points who are appointed in IBSA Foreign Ministries are career diplomats who by the nature of their careers move from their Headquarters to foreign assignments or other Ministry portfolios. This results in lack of institutional memory and continuity as new Focal Points take over the positions. Momentum also gets lost as the new incumbents need some time to familiarise themselves with the issues before being able to make impact. In a case of a fixed Secretariat, the change of Heads would not heavily affect operations as the systems would have been in place.

At the same time, these three countries' different diplomatic styles and cultures also play a significant role. Co-ordination mechanisms and dynamics in the foreign ministries of the three IBSA countries, which are the locus of IBSA focal points, provide possible insights into the constraints experienced by the sectoral working groups. In the case of the India, IBSA co-ordination has been affected by apparent territorial issues between line departments who are specialists and the office of the Focal Point, leaving the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) with little negotiating powers when the specialists do not attend meetings. Informal discussions with IBSA senior officials confirmed this fact following an IBSA Focal Points meeting that was hosted by India when the MEA reportedly tried in vain to convene some sectoral working groups alongside the Focal Points Meeting as is customary. An official in the MEA reportedly remarked about the territorial issues amongst the government department and the MEA's inability to 'instruct' them.

It also appears that the sectoral working groups had carved their own operational autonomy as most had developed their own timelines and calendars that do not necessarily coincide with the Focal Points' calendars. This operational autonomy



to a large extent suits the South African *modus operandi*, albeit by default. South Africa has seen a proliferation of International Relations units at all levels of government (i.e. national, provincial, and local government), notwithstanding the evocation of the DIRCO's primary role as that of conducting and co-ordination of South Africa's Foreign Policy in the White Paper on Foreign Policy<sup>81</sup>. IBSA sector departments in South Africa, as a result, work autonomously and reportedly do not always provide the requisite reports and updates to the Focal Point at DIRCO.

The Brazilian foreign ministry, on the other hand, is believed to have better co-ordination amongst national departments. This is said to be assisted by the secondment of foreign ministry officials to line departments in order to strengthen co-ordination. It is also a known fact that the operationalisation of Brazilian foreign policy is largely driven by the *Itamaraty* (the Brazilian Foreign Ministry).

#### **4.5 IBSA Trilateral co-operation within the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of emerging countries**

The theoretical arguments of chapter 2 in this study established that IBSA countries are both regional- and middle-powers. Amongst the criteria identified by Flesher in his characterisation of regional-powers is these countries' possession of power resources and the choice and employment of their foreign policy instruments to advance their aspirations (Flesher, 2007:11-18). The strengthening of regional co-operation and in particular economic ties through sectoral collaboration amongst IBSA countries is also consistent with balance of power theory. From a realist perspective, Flesher (2008:14) refers to this as soft balancing tactics which middle-powers with limited hegemonic leverage employ in an effort to tilt the balance of power against a dominant power such as the USA.

IBSA countries have chosen to strengthen socio-economic co-operation amongst themselves through the identification of mutual areas of co-operation and developing attendant modalities for the advancement of the trilateral co-

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<sup>81</sup> White Paper on SA's Foreign Policy. [www.gov.za/documents/download.php?f=149749](http://www.gov.za/documents/download.php?f=149749). Accessed on 15 January 2014.

operation. This is echoed in the communique of the second IBSA Joint Commission which states that one of the principle purposes of IBSA is the advancement of human development through promotion of potential synergies amongst its members<sup>82</sup>. They also committed to support the development of Technical Co-operation amongst Developing Countries.

Stephen (2011:18) argues that the notion of 'soft balancing' through regional and South-South trade liberalisation may be an appropriate mode for understanding the response to Northern protectionism. In this regard, IBSA countries are pursuing intra-IBSA trade which will be extended to the respective IBSA regions by negotiating an India-MERCOSUR-SACU Trilateral Free Trade Agreement. The IBSA Free Trade Agreement is viewed as a political intervention to prevent the further uneven distribution of global trade flows. Other sectoral working groups have also developed work programmes that have created South-South platforms that spread benefits beyond just the IBSA countries. For example, the launch of the virtual centre of Excellence in Public Administration has presented an important platform for South-South exchanges. The working group on Climate Change and Environment has also identified opportunities for capacity-building in other developing countries. The working group on Agriculture played a key role in ensuring the success of the first project funded by the IBSA Trust fund in Guinea Bissau.

The establishment of the IBSA Trust Fund also remains another classical example of these countries' choice of foreign policy instruments to advance their aspirations as regional-powers. This fund is also in line with these countries' commitment to support the development of Technical Co-operation amongst Developing Countries (TCDC) which is a key modality for South-South co-operation.

## **6. Conclusion**

It has been established that the trilateral co-operation stands to benefit these countries in the long term. IBSA countries also need to build and strengthen co-

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<sup>82</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> IBSA Ministerial Communique, 2005

operation that enhances their leverage as regional players. The current trilateral co-operation agenda presents these countries with an opportunity to play a significant role of South-South co-operation providers as demonstrated by the IBSA Fund which is aimed at promoting South-South co-operation in other developing countries. There is also great potential for trilateral co-operation to transcend IBSA countries and benefit other countries of the South through the work of the trilateral working groups as some have already started engaging with countries beyond IBSA.

The trilateral sectoral co-operation, however, remains plagued by an uneven momentum and a lack of tangible progress which could be attributed to weak institutional mechanisms and frameworks in the co-ordination of IBSA's work. There is also need for the rationalisation of the working groups in order to maximise the results and effectiveness of the co-operation. Notwithstanding the prevailing constraints, IBSA trilateral co-operation remains a viable instrument for the advancement of co-operation amongst the three countries and as a modality for South-South co-operation.

## **Chapter 5: The Global Agenda of the IBSA Dialogue Forum**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter examines the scope of IBSA's multilateral agenda and its manifestations as driven by the IBSA Heads of State and Government and assesses constraints and challenges faced by IBSA in advancing this agenda. It also examines the extent to which the IBSA Dialogue Forum incubates new institutional modalities and normative paths for South-South co-operation and to what extent these are borne out in the IBSA global agenda. It concludes by assessing whether the capacity of IBSA's normative agenda is sustainable in light of commitments already made in the trilateral agenda.

From the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, the three member states have been committed to sharing common views on a wide range of multilateral issues with particular focus on the management of global governance. At the heart of global governance debate is the need for the levelling of playing fields in order to afford all countries an equal voice in the decision-making processes of multilateral institutions.

The current architecture of global governance favours powerful states while developing countries remain on the periphery since agendas are set and decisions taken without due consultation and consideration of the needs of the countries that are directly affected by such decisions and agendas (Ozkan, 2011:85; Zurn & Stephen 2010:93-95). From the onset, IBSA countries articulated a key focus of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, namely, the commitment to multilateralism and the preeminent role of the United Nations as a basis of working together to strengthen the multilateral system<sup>83</sup>. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Bretton Woods Institutions would also come in for review as a critical part of this process.

### **5.2 The Scope of the IBSA Global Agenda**

As a practice established at the 2003 inaugural meeting of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, the three countries meet to reflect on issues and developments of

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<sup>83</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit Declaration (2006) paragraph 7

mutual concern and interest in the global arena as they seek to promote and advocate peace, security, and sustainable economic and social development in the world and in their respective regions. The focus of thematic areas discussed in IBSA meetings vary depending on topical global issues at the time of the meetings. The strengthening of the global system of governance in order to elevate the voice of the South as well as the promotion of the economic agenda of the South underpins the activism of IBSA countries in multilateral forums. The table below shows the thematic issues that IBSA Summits discussed and the frequency of these discussions in the five IBSA Summits from 2006-2011.

**Table 1: Thematic areas covered in IBSA Summits from 2006 - 2011**

1 <sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit (2006)	2 <sup>nd</sup> IBSA Summit (2007)	3 <sup>rd</sup> IBSA Summit (2008)	4 <sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit (2010)	5 <sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit (2011)
United Nations Reform and particularly the UNSC	United Nations Reform and particularly the UNSC	United Nations Reform and particularly the UNSC	United Nations Reform and particularly the UNSC	United Nations Reform and particularly the UNSC
Reform of International Financial Institutions			Reform of International Financial Institutions	Reform of International Financial Institutions
International Trade (WTO)	International Trade (WTO)	International Trade (WTO)	International Trade (WTO)	International Trade (WTO)
	Intellectual Property	Intellectual Property	Intellectual Property	Intellectual Property
		International financial crisis	International financial crisis	International financial crisis
			Social dimensions of globalisation	Social dimensions of globalisation
Sustainable Development		Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development
Climate Change	Climate Change	Climate Change	Climate Change	Climate Change
Biodiversity	Biodiversity	Biodiversity		Biodiversity
		Energy		Energy
Millennium Development Goals	Millennium Development Goals	Millennium Development Goals		Millennium Development Goals
			Internet Governance	Internet Governance

		Food Security		Food Security
Health	Health			Health
Gender	Gender			Gender
Human Rights	Human Rights	Human Rights	Human Rights	Human Rights
				Transnational organised crime
International Terrorism	International Terrorism	International Terrorism	International Terrorism	International Terrorism
			Peace building Commission	Peace building Commission
Disarmament and non-proliferation	Disarmament and non-proliferation	Disarmament and non-proliferation	Disarmament and non-proliferation	Disarmament and non-proliferation
Peaceful Use of Nuclear energy	Peaceful Use of Nuclear energy	Peaceful Use of Nuclear energy		
Disaster Management				

**Source: IBSA Summit Communiqués from 2006 -2011**

Whilst IBSA has made pronouncements on many of these themes based on their particular common positions and the position of developing countries generally, there are thematic areas in which IBSA countries went further to display visible activism including pushing co-ordinated positions amongst themselves in order to strengthen their voice. These include: reform of global governance institutions (United Nations, Bretton Woods Institutions, and WTO); human rights; global security; sustainable development and climate change. These thematic areas will be used as case studies to assess the opportunities and challenges that exist in IBSA's trilateral co-operation and co-ordination on multilateral issues.

### **5.3 Thematic areas of IBSA's activism**

#### **5.3.1 Reform of Global Governance Institutions**

The IBSA countries have repeatedly argued that the strengthening of the global governance system is critical for the advancement of peace, security, and sustainable socio-economic development. Their advocacy is aimed at increasing the voice and participation of developing countries in decision-making structures of global institutions, the absence of which has rendered these institutions undemocratic and void of legitimacy. IBSA countries have thus used platforms provided by multilateral institutions to sharply raise these

issues in order to challenge the status quo of the current international order historically dominated by the West and the United States in particular.

### **5.3.1.1 United Nations Reform**

The reform of the United Nations and in particular the UN Security Council is by far the most critical game-changer in the global governance discourse because the United Nations, by virtue of its universal membership and its Charter, is vested with the responsibility of promoting peace, security, and sustainable socio-economic development. IBSA countries and the rest of the developing world are unequivocal in pointing out the pre-eminent role of the United Nations in multilateralism.

IBSA countries have consistently made bold pronouncements on the reform of the United Nations and in particular the United Nations Security Council in every meeting either at Trilateral Ministerial level or Summit level. The elements of their reform concerns include:

- support for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations ;
- enhancement of the effectiveness of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council; and
- reform of the United Security Council with an expansion that includes developing countries in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

There has been considerable progress in other aspects of United Nations reform as evidenced by the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission in December 2005 and the Human Rights Council (HRC) in March 2006 as well as further progress in the areas of development and management in the United Nations. IBSA countries recognised this progress<sup>84</sup>.

As they focused on the reform of UN Security Council, IBSA countries reaffirmed their commitment to continue to jointly pursue a decision on Security Council expansion, adding that this commitment would be pursued on an urgent basis. They committed to further strengthen co-operation

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<sup>84</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2006)

amongst themselves and other member countries in pursuing genuine reform of the UNSC<sup>85</sup>.

The recommendations of the report of the UN High Level Panel<sup>86</sup> emboldened the campaign of IBSA countries in their quest for permanent seats on the UN Security Council. The report essentially proposed two models for UN Security Council reform. The first option provides for, amongst others, the creation of six new permanent seats (with no veto powers) with Africa, and the Asia and Pacific region allocated two seats each and one seat each allocated to Europe and the Americas. The second option provides for no new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight 4-year renewable term seats and one 2-year non-permanent and non-renewable seats divided amongst the major regions.

An option that seemed attractive for IBSA countries was that which provided for six new permanent members of the UNSC. India and Brazil immediately formed an alliance with Germany and Japan (the G-4) and campaigned actively as they positioned themselves for seats in their respective regions. South Africa, although constrained by the African common position<sup>87</sup>, still went on to position itself as one of the two African countries provided for in the Panel's proposal. However, South Africa could not be part of the campaign of the G-4 due to the country's initial reluctance to come out and immediately declare its candidacy for one of the seats allocated to Africa. As a result, South Africa's advocacy on the matter remained mainly within the context of the IBSA campaign.

As the proposals of the UN Panel were still required to be subjected to rigorous intergovernmental negotiations, the IBSA ambition proved unattainable as UN member states grappled with the far-reaching implications of change in the distribution of power in terms of the UN Panel proposals. This

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<sup>85</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2007)

<sup>86</sup> Report of the United Nations High-Level on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled "A more secure world : our shared responsibility", 2 December 2004, [www.unrol.org/files/gaA/59/565](http://www.unrol.org/files/gaA/59/565) Accessed : 23/01/14

<sup>87</sup> EZulwini Consensus is an African common position on UNSC reform which, *inter alia*, calls for 2 permanent seats for Africa with veto powers



resulted in the 2006 deadlock in UNSC reform negotiations, with intergovernmental negotiations still continuing in this regard.

Beyond their bids for UNSC permanent seats, IBSA countries have continued to invest political capital in their participation in the UNSC and also collaborated in advancing their perspectives throughout their participation in the work of the United Nations at large.

The posture of IBSA countries in the UN reform debate and particularly their quest for permanent UNSC membership could be viewed through the lenses of the institutional perspective of Liberalism. While international institutionalisation has been recognised for its significant contribution to interdependence in the post-Cold War era, international institutions, however, are faced with legitimacy crises due to the marginalisation of developing countries in their decision-making structures (Phillips, 2008:6). The debate at the United Nations reform centres on the recognition of the sovereignty of all states and the equal distribution of power, especially in the United Nations Security Council.

IBSA countries are therefore using the platform of the United Nations to resist attempts by the US and other Northern powers to promote new norms of domination that undermine the sovereignty of UN member countries. In 2003, IBSA countries refused to support the US-led attack on Iraq. South Africa, during its first tenure as non-permanent member of the UNSC from 2007-2008, refused to support resolutions on human rights violations in Myanmar and Zimbabwe. This was a political statement that challenged attempts by major powers to undermine the sovereignty of other states through mandate creep and forcing onto the UNSC agenda issues that should be discussed and decided elsewhere in the UN system, in this case at the UN Human Rights Council with the wider and democratic participation of UN member states.

The IBSA countries had an opportunity of serving together as non-permanent members of the UNSC in 2011. During their tenure, they repeatedly differed

with Western powers and particularly the USA on granting NATO legal authority to militarily intervene in Libya. Sharp differences also arose on the management of the Syrian conflict as IBSA countries pushed for a political solution as opposed to military intervention. IBSA countries even sent envoys to help generate momentum for a political solution in Syria.

These countries' aspirations for UNSC permanent membership can be seen as a tactical move to be integrated into the system with the aim of influencing norms and practices from within and ultimately balancing the influence of the veto-wielding powers in the UN Security Council. This is the essence of their "soft power" attributes.

At the same time, Stephen (2011:25-26) also argues that IBSA countries' positioning in the UN Security Council is consistent with the behaviour of emerging regional-powers as these powers often articulate a desire to strengthen aspects of international institutions by arguing for a more egalitarian distribution of political decision-making while at the same time championing their own case for special representation.

#### Challenges/Constraints

The challenges that come with IBSA countries' diplomatic and political attempts to reform the UNSC still require the endorsement of their regional groups. As regional-powers, they still face competition from other countries in their regions as was seen in the intergovernmental negotiations on the expansion of the UNSC. In addition, South Africa also remains constrained by the AU position which does not make it an automatic ally of the G-4.

Even within BRICS, IBSA countries have not yet received unequivocal support for their UNSC ambitions. The Sanya BRICS Summit Declaration<sup>88</sup> recognised the need for the reform of the United Nations and the UNSC in order to make it more representative and effective, but fell short of explicitly supporting the aspirations of IBSA countries for permanent UNSC membership.

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<sup>88</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> BRICS Leaders Meeting Declaration, Sanya 14 April 2011 [www.gov.cn](http://www.gov.cn) Accessed: 13 January 2014

While IBSA countries have actively engaged in many programmes and activities of the UNSC, their principled stances which challenged and frustrated Western interests on issues related to Libya, Syria, Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, and Myanmar have led to heavy criticism. Former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Ms Susan Rice, went as far as questioning these countries' democratic credentials as they did not support resolutions that impacted on the protection of human rights, democracy, and the protection of civilians<sup>89</sup>.

### **5.3.1.2 The World Trade Organization**

IBSA's approach to international trade is informed by the need to reform the institutional structure, substance, and rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO is the central multilateral institution that governs the global trading system. At the same time, it is attempting to advance the development agenda of the South in trade negotiations in terms of the letter and spirit of the Doha Development Agenda of 2001 which has sputtered along inconclusively, mainly because of developed country intransigence.

IBSA countries have since the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum been consistent in their position on the WTO as well as the Doha mandate of current multilateral trade negotiations. They have highlighted the importance of the development dimension of the Doha Round and underlined that agriculture remains the key to the conclusion of the Round<sup>90</sup>. They have also advocated for the improvement of the rules of the multilateral trading system arguing for greater balance and fairness. The current institutional structure of the WTO is such that there is minimal participation of developing countries in the decisive "green room" phase of the negotiations, where strategic behind-the-scenes deals are made and mostly driven by developed countries and where developing countries are either conveniently co-opted or marginalised.

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<sup>89</sup> Bloomberg Business Week "U.S. 'Not Encouraged' by India, South Africa, and Brazil at UN" : [www.bloomberg.com/](http://www.bloomberg.com/)  
Accessed: 16 January 2014

<sup>90</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2007)

The stance of IBSA countries on these issues is consistent with that of the G-20 (twenty two developing countries in favour of agricultural liberalisation in the WTO), to which the collapse of the 2003 Doha trade talks is attributed. Stephen (2011:16) argues that the stand-off between developing and developed countries in Cancun, Mexico was invigorated by the increased bargaining power and diplomatic weight of emerging regional-powers (which include IBSA countries). Even as the Doha Round of negotiations resumed, IBSA countries reaffirmed their commitment to carry out negotiations in favour of an outcome that was fair and acceptable to all<sup>91</sup>.

Furthermore, India and Brazil represented developing countries in the G-4 of the WTO (joining the EU and USA) in an effort to facilitate convergence on contentious issues in the negotiations especially on trading rules, agricultural market access, and industrial tariffs.

The behavior of IBSA countries within the WTO could be viewed through the lenses of both the balance of power perspective of neo-realism, as well as the institutional perspective of Liberalism. The balance of power perspective asserts that as emerging powers rise in power and influence, they seek to balance the power and influence of a dominant power by using non-military tactics such as entangling diplomacy and formation of coalitions to challenge the powerful (Flemes 2009: 408; Stephen,2011:9). IBSA countries have thus come together to challenge the dominance of the developed powers by spearheading the formation of the formidable G-20+ during the 2003 Cancun WTO Ministerial Meeting. IBSA countries have also formed alliances with China to drive intellectual property issues as well an alliance with the Non Agricultural Market Access 11 countries (NAMA11)<sup>92</sup>.

The quest to reform the working methods and improved governance of the WTO is consistent with the institutional perspective. The inclusion of India and Brazil in the G-4 (which effectively replaced the traditional “quad” group which involved the EU, USA, Australia, and Japan), albeit short-lived, represented a

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid

<sup>92</sup> Coalition of developing countries seeking flexibilities to limit market opening in industrial goods trade. [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org).

positive shift in WTO rule-making and working methods in response to the repeated calls of IBSA for improved fairness in the multilateral trade system.

The diplomatic leadership that the IBSA countries provided in instigating the formation of the G20 coalition in 2003 as well as their alliance with China on intellectual property issues are consistent with regional- and middle-power behaviour.

### Challenges /Constraints

While IBSA countries share common views and convictions about the reform of the working methods and rules of the WTO, as well as the importance of prioritising the development needs of developing countries in the Doha trade negotiations, these countries have different national interests that do not always converge in the overall trade negotiations. Although they do not necessarily co-ordinate specific positions amongst themselves, IBSA countries belong to various issue-based alliances in the WTO. These include alliances such as the G-20 and NAMA 11. IBSA countries also share common positions on intellectual property with China. South Africa also tries to represent the AU position in WTO negotiations albeit without controversy.

The IBSA countries' positions on agriculture do not always converge again due to each country's national interests. In particular, India's position on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and non-tariff barriers diverges from those of Brazil and South Africa. India seeks protection against surges of agricultural imports and Brazil advocates broad liberalisation of the global agricultural market. Notwithstanding this, IBSA countries share common views on market access, reduction of trade distorting domestic support, and the elimination of export subsidies.

Competition amongst IBSA countries is unavoidable since they must secure and also compete for access to new markets. While they can co-operate in the elimination of agriculture subsidies, it is expected that IBSA countries cannot make a common offer for market access. As South Africa is the entry point to the African market, an opportunity exists for these countries to compete for access to this potentially lucrative market.

IBSA countries, however, remain a strong voice and have carved a niche in the global governance discourse (in this case global trade negotiations) even as they increase their weight in negotiations by building alliances with other large emerging countries such as China and other like-minded developing countries which have increasingly challenged the dominance of traditional commercial powers.

### **5.3.1.3 Reform of International Financial Institutions**

The reform of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) has for a long time been a preoccupation of IBSA and other developing countries as these institutions represent a critical dimension of global governance with renowned democratic and legitimacy deficits. The key institutions in this regard are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Both the United States of America and the European Union have been in firm control of these institutions since they were established after World War II. They have stifled reforms even at a time when these institutions' operations and governance were not responsive to changing global economic dynamics. In terms of established practice, the EU provides a candidate to head the IMF (Managing Director) but also has influence over the appointment of the 24 member IMF Board. The USA, on the other hand, provides a candidate to head the World Bank (President). These two actors, the USA and the EU, thus effectively have control of the governance, policies, and operations of these institutions. These actors' political preferences and ideologies have a strong bearing on the policies that are pursued and imposed on developing countries.

The IMF lost much credibility after it received widespread criticism for its handling of the Asian financial crisis in 1996. However, the collapse of Russia's and Argentina's economies in 1998 prompted governments to reduce and even eliminate their reliance on the IMF (Ikenberry and Wright, 2008:19). There has also been mounting criticism of the functioning of the World Bank and questions over its mandate and governance have received

sharp scrutiny especially its austerity measures in Africa which have resulted in growing poverty and social dislocation.

IBSA has repeatedly called for the reform of these institutions in order to increase their effectiveness and enhance their accountability, credibility, and legitimacy and has also stressed the importance of increasing the role of developing countries in these institutions through judicious reform of their voting structures.

The voice of IBSA countries was given more impetus as they joined with China and Russia within the context of BRICS in the wake of the international financial crisis in 2008. These countries took bolder stances as they supported the reform and improvement of the international monetary system (Stephen, 2011:22). IBSA countries also found a collective voice together with other developing countries within the G-20 of the IMF as they continued to advance the development agenda of the South. South Africa, together with South Korea and France co-chair the Development Working Group of the G-20.

IBSA countries seek to be part of these institutions in order to influence changes from within. These countries' quest to join these institutions could also be seen as the commitment of IBSA countries to international institutionalism in recognition of a positive role that these institutions could play when operating democratically to improve global financial and developmental governance.

In 2008, some agreements on quota and governance reforms within the IMF were reached. Another package of far-reaching reforms of the IMF's quotas and governance was approved by the IMF Board of Governors in December 2010. According to the IMF, these reforms represent a major re-alignment in the ranking of quota shares that better reflect global economic realities and a strengthening in the Fund's legitimacy and effectiveness<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> IMF Press Release No.10/477 of 16 December 2010. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/pr/sec/pr/2010/pr10477.htm> Accessed: 2 February 2014.

### Challenges/ Constraints

The major challenge for IBSA countries is the slow pace of reforms in these institutions even after some agreements have been reached. This relates to the fact that member countries still have to subject any IMF decision to their domestic approval processes before they can be ratified. In some countries this requires parliamentary approval.

The calls of IBSA and other developing countries for merit-based appointments in the leadership of the International Financial Institutions were spurned when the vacancy of the head of IMF was filled by a European candidate, namely, the former French Finance Minister, Mrs Christine Lagarde, despite the fielding of equally competent candidates from Brazil and Nigeria. This appointment signalled the continued resistance from Western powers to allow for tangible change in the leadership of these institutions.

### **5.3.2 Human Rights**

The IBSA countries have been at the forefront of efforts that support institutional reform of the United Nations which led to the formation of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2006. Upon being elected to the UNHRC, IBSA countries declared their shared vision on the promotion and protection of human rights which reaffirms the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes the realisation and operationalisation of the Right to Development and the special protection of rights of vulnerable groups<sup>94</sup>. They undertook to work on coordinated contributions to the Council's agenda and structure.

Key on the IBSA agenda in this regard is to promote a holistic approach to human rights, arguing that the work of the HRC should be free of politicisation, double standards, and selectivity and should ultimately promote international co-operation<sup>95</sup>. IBSA as well as other developing countries have argued for recognising the notion that development, peace and security, and

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<sup>94</sup> 1st IBSA Summit communique (2006)

<sup>95</sup> 3rd IBSA Summit communique (2008)



human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This focus has also been integrated into these countries' diplomacy in the UNHRC.

The ascension to the membership of the newly constituted UNHRC gave IBSA countries the leverage to advance their normative aspirations as they sought to influence the functioning and working methods of the UNHRC. In welcoming the outcome of the review of the working methods of the UNHRC, these countries emphasised the centrality of the Human Rights Council and acknowledged the positive advance represented by the creation of a functioning Human Rights Council<sup>96</sup>.

IBSA countries have also sought to strengthen co-operation amongst themselves with a view to exchanging information about national policies and initiatives that could translate into dialogue and mutual benefit in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms<sup>97</sup>. The strengthening of co-operation amongst them at country level is significant in advancing South-South co-operation.

### Challenges/Constraints

While there has been concert in the co-ordination of issues amongst IBSA countries on human rights issues in the UN system as demonstrated above, there have also been some divergences in these countries' voting behaviour, notably in the Human Rights Council. Between 2008 and 2010, when the three countries were serving together in the Human Rights Council, their voting patterns, particularly on country specific issues, were markedly divergent as shown in the table below.

**Table 2: IBSA countries' country specific voting patterns in the HRC (2008-2010)**

Resolution	Yes (support)	No (Against)	Abstain
<i>A/HRC/RES/7/15 (March 2008)</i> Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea	Brazil		South Africa India
<i>A/HRC/RES/7/16 (March 2008)</i> Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*	Brazil India South Africa		
<i>A/HRC/RES/9/17 (September 2008)</i>	Brazil India		

<sup>96</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> IBSA Summit communique and 4<sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit Communique (2008, 2010)

<sup>97</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2008)

Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*	South Africa		
A/HRC/RES/11/10 (June 2009) Situation of Human Rights in Sudan	Brazil	South Africa	India
A/HRC/RES/10/16 (March 2009) Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea			Brazil India South Africa
A HRC/RES/13/14 (April 2010) Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Korea	Brazil		South Africa India

\* Adopted without a vote

These differences in voting patterns on country-specific resolutions may signal these countries' independent identities and national interests. At the same time it is instructive to note that these countries had at some stages voted uniformly.

IBSA countries have also been subjected to strong criticism collectively and as individual countries for their stances. The European Union has always viewed IBSA countries as their natural allies due to their democratic credentials. However, from the EU perspective, IBSA's voting patterns on human rights in the UN General Assembly, UNSC, and the UNHRC have been disappointing and they made particular reference to Brazil. The 2010 review report of the European Council on Foreign Relations<sup>98</sup> describes Brazil as an absent friend at the United Nations as it tabulates how it systematically voted against the EU on human rights issues (ECFR, 2010:1-2). The difference between IBSA (and other developing countries) and Western countries in voting behaviour is not only restricted to country specific resolutions but includes an array of issues.

### 5.3.3 Global Security

Notwithstanding their respective regional security agendas, IBSA countries have been able to speak with one voice on key global security issues. With regard to the conflicts in the Middle East, IBSA countries continue to support international efforts aimed at finding a peaceful settlement to conflicts in that region. They have continued to condemn the escalation of violence and

<sup>98</sup> Richard Gowan and Franziska Bantner. *The EU and Human Rights at the UN* (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2010)

extreme use of force against civilians. This applies both to the Lebanon war in 2006 and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. IBSA countries, like most developing countries recognise the State of Palestine and support the two-state solution under the Road Map for Peace in the Middle East<sup>99</sup>.

IBSA countries have consistently pronounced on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and have emphasised the need to respect International Humanitarian Law. They have gone further by financing technical co-operation projects in Gaza and the West Bank through the IBSA Trust Fund<sup>100</sup>.

On terrorism, IBSA countries have been consistent in their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and have called for co-operation amongst member states in resolving outstanding issues for the conclusion of negotiations and adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism<sup>101</sup>. The terrorist attacks in India in 2006 and 2010 have increased the spotlight on their campaign to combat terrorism. IBSA countries also affirm the central role of the United Nations in co-ordinating international action against terrorism within the framework of the UN Charter and in accordance with international law<sup>102</sup>.

With regard to disarmament and non-proliferation, IBSA countries have repeatedly proclaimed their commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and have underscored that disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring irreversible progress on both fronts<sup>103</sup>. They also attach importance to the Conference on Disarmament but have lamented the lack of progress in the Conference which is a sole multilateral disarmament forum<sup>104</sup>.

As members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), IBSA countries have been outspoken about their support for the inalienable right of

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<sup>99</sup> The Roadmap is an initiative of the Quartet (United Nations, United States, European Union, and Russia) aimed at the comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 3, paragraph 3.4 on the IBSA Trust Fund

<sup>101</sup> IBSA Summit Communiqués from (2006 – 2011)

<sup>102</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit communiqué (2011)

<sup>103</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> IBSA Summit communiqués (2006-2011)

<sup>104</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit communiqué (2006)

all states to the peaceful use of nuclear energy consistent with their international legal obligations, and have called for a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue<sup>105</sup>.

At the 2010 IBSA Summit, the three countries expressed support for the International Convention Prohibiting the Development, Production, Stockpiling and use of Nuclear weapons leading to their destruction.

#### Challenges/Constraints

South Africa and Brazil share common positions on disarmament and non-proliferation and are signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Both countries renounced their nuclear weapons programmes. India, on the other hand, is not a signatory of the NPT and in 2005 decided to embark on nuclear commercial trade – a position contrary to that of fellow IBSA countries.

South Africa is known to be amongst the most influential members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and together with Brazil had to be part of the NSG decision that legitimised the US-India nuclear deal for commercial purposes despite this deal going against these countries' convictions. It is believed that South Africa and Brazil's decision to support India was meant to preserve the IBSA Dialogue Forum. The support for India which is a non-signatory country of the NSG is viewed as a shift in South Africa's non-proliferation policy from one that is rule- and principle- based to a more pragmatic one. (Flemes & Vaz, 2011:10).

#### **5.3.4 Sustainable Development and Climate Change**

IBSA countries are amongst the leading voices of the South in sustainable development and climate change debates and have repeatedly declared their commitment to working together towards the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

At the core of the sustainable development debates is the issue of how developing countries are treated, taking into account their unique socio-

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid*

economic development challenges. The Group of 77 and China have consistently maintained that developing countries require additional financial resources and capacities in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, and hence the call for the provision of adequate financial resources and transfer of technologies at fair and affordable prices<sup>106</sup>.

These countries also place a premium on the principles of the Rio Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Action and maintain that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities should continue to guide multilateral negotiations on environmental issues<sup>107</sup>. This principle informs the approach of developing countries to the climate change negotiations taking place within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). IBSA countries have, therefore, called for urgent action on climate change because it has a disproportionately higher impact on developing countries. IBSA countries have also emphasised the need for new additional efforts and additional financing for adaptation in developing countries without diverting resources for development<sup>108</sup>.

IBSA countries face similar mammoth challenges of dealing simultaneously with the impact and management of climate change, energy security, and socio-economic development. Their common challenges have informed how they have sought potential allies and appropriate forums of dialogue with developing country partners. In this regard, a natural partner amongst the developing countries has been China and thus the BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) was formed to advance common positions which were aligned with developing country interests.

While the BASIC group has been in existence since early 2004, the group rose to prominence during the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen. Masters (2012:1) argues that Copenhagen provided a turning-point in multilateral environmental negotiations since it most importantly institutionalised the

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<sup>106</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2006)

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> IBSA Summit communique (2007)

BASIC group which was instrumental in shaping the Copenhagen Accord. Masters (2012:2) adds that, as significant contributors to the greenhouse gas emissions and with increased pressure from the developed countries for emerging developing countries to take on more commitments, BASIC countries offered a platform for them to advance questions of equity, fairness, and the future of socio-economic development.

The formation of the BASIC is consistent with the soft balancing behaviour of emerging regional-power powers that, amongst others, form alliances to counter-balance the behaviour of a major power (and in this case Western powers). It is also consistent with the middle-power behaviour as these countries formed the BASIC coalition and acted as catalysts to drive specific issues that affect them and other developing countries.

#### Challenges/Constraints

The effectiveness of IBSA in sustainable development and climate change debates appears well-served through the BASIC alliance. While BASIC was seen as having played key roles in Copenhagen during COP15, momentum in the run up to the COP17 in Durban has reportedly waned. This is attributed to seeming differences that emerged amongst the members of BASIC due to competing interests.

Particular challenges have, by and large, emerged within the G-77 and China as there are categories of countries with different needs and which are also at different stages of development. These include Least Developing Countries (LDCs), Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and OPEC member countries<sup>109</sup>. This has made it difficult for these countries to maintain common positions. Furthermore, the Africa Group decided to negotiate as a bloc during the COP17 negotiations. Concerted efforts, therefore, would need to be made to maintain the unity of the G-77 in order to continue advancing the common interests of developing countries.

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<sup>109</sup> Members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

### 5.3.5 Classifying the IBSA posture in global governance debates within conceptual and theoretical frameworks

The posture of IBSA countries in global governance debates can be summarised by varied degrees of regional- and middle-power behaviour (see Table 3 and 4) as well as the extent to which neorealism and Liberalism theories help to explain their positions across major systemic issues in global governance (see Table 5). The following tables highlight this point as articulated in this chapter.

**Table 3. Regional-power behaviour**

	UN reform	WTO negotiations	Reform of the IFIs	Human Rights	Global security	Sustainable development and climate change
Possession of necessary power resources	5	5	4	4	4	5
Use of foreign policy instruments	5	5	4	4	4	5
Acceptance of regional leadership role	2	3	3	3	3	3

Index: 1=weak --> 5=strong

As regional-powers, IBSA countries expended considerable diplomatic mileage and resources in advancing their foreign policy positions in global governance debates and negotiations. However, the acceptance of their regional leadership roles scored lower due to attendant power dynamics in their respective regions. This was sharply manifested in UNSC reform debates.

**Table 4. Middle-power behaviour**

	UN reform	WTO negotiations	Reform of the IFIs	Human Rights	Global security	Sustainable development and climate change
Support the multilateral system	5	5	5	5	4	5
Coalition building	4	4	3	4	4	4
Catalysts and facilitators	4	5	4	4	3	4

on selective issues						
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Index: 1=weak --> 5 =strong

As middle-powers, IBSA countries fared substantially well in spearheading coalitions and being catalysts in driving consensus on specific issues in global governance negotiations. The middle-power status of IBSA was evident in largely all thematic areas identified in this study.

**Table 5. Theoretical postulates**

	UN reform	WTO negotiations	Reform of the IFIs	Human Rights	Global security	Sustainable development and climate change
Realism and neorealism	4	4	4	4	4	4
Liberalism	5	5	5	5	5	5

Index: 1=weak --> 5 =strong

IBSA effectively used international institutions, in line with the Liberalism perspective, as a platform to resist attempts of Western powers to promote norms of domination. This included trying to influence in decision-making structures and their consistent engagement in these institutions. From a neo-realist perspective, they also formed coalitions amongst themselves and like-minded developing countries to block and constrain the dominance of Western powers in global governance debates.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

The breadth and scope of the thematic issues that IBSA countries have covered in their Summits demonstrate the importance that these countries attach to the management of global governance. IBSA's redistributive aspirations and normative agendas have managed to gain considerable recognition and traction in critical United Nations debates and this impact also extended into other multilateral contexts. The challenge that remains is to convert these aspirations into tangible results.

The thematic case studies that have been identified in assessing the opportunities and challenges of IBSA's trilateral co-operation and co-



ordination provide some useful insights which will be further expounded upon in the concluding chapter.

The performance of IBSA countries in the identified thematic areas indicates that they will require the employment of different strategies and tactics in order to sustain momentum for better results, given the inherently protracted nature of multilateral negotiations. It is also noted that gains are mostly on an issue-basis and not necessarily on a wider thematic or strategic basis. This was the case in the WTO as these countries made collective gains in leading the G-20+ coalition on the overall Doha round direction but they needed to work with other countries to drive other specific issues. The same pattern repeats itself on climate change issues and the reform of International Financial Institutions.

Even on UN reform debates, there are several thematic issues as shown in Table 1 above that would require the diplomatic capital and leadership of IBSA for their advancement. In the same breath, IBSA countries have committed themselves to an equally ambitious trilateral co-operation agenda as shown in chapter 4 of this study. A proper analysis of IBSA capability and reprioritisation of its vast agenda may be necessary. This issue will also be further explored in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study began by introducing the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum which was formed in 2003 following extensive consultations amongst Heads of States of the three countries.

The inaugural declaration of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, the Brasilia Declaration (2003), stated that the Forum was necessitated by an imperative for a process of dialogue amongst like-minded countries of the South which share common concerns and ideas about the restructuring of global governance and strengthening of the agenda of the South. In articulating their co-operation agenda, these countries also identified trilateral sectoral co-operation in areas of mutual interest as a vehicle for the promotion of social and economic development amongst themselves.

The international milieu in which the emergence of the IBSA Dialogue Forum occurred was characterised by a post-Cold War era that is dominated by the powerful North, with the USA as the main hegemon; unfettered globalisation; as well as the growing marginalisation of the South. The dominance of the North is also strongly manifested in the shaping of global governance structures which excluded the voice of developing countries, resulting in wide criticism of the legitimacy of these global institutions.

The emergence of IBSA, therefore, represents some of the foreign policy responses and strategic activism of developing countries to the widening political, economic, and social differences between the South and the North. The study therefore sought to examine how IBSA countries, on one hand, use diplomacy to advance trilateral co-operation amongst themselves, and, on the other, the extent to which they are able to influence the management of the global system of governance. The study further sought to examine the tensions that arise between IBSA's trilateral agenda which promotes instrumental or material ends and objectives, and the aspirations of its global agenda with respect to normative goals and objectives.

The second chapter brought together the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in which the emergence of the IBSA Dialogue Forum can be understood. IBSA countries are characterised as both regional- and middle-powers. Fliemes (2007:11-18) proposed four criteria for identifying and classifying regional-powers. These include formulation of the claim to leadership; possession of the necessary power resources in order to make a difference in international bargaining; choice and employment of foreign policy instruments whether ideational or material; and the acceptance of the leadership role of a regional-power. IBSA countries largely conformed to this characterisation as illustrated by their diplomacy both in their respective regions and internationally.

In characterising IBSA countries as middle-powers, similarities are drawn between classical middle-powers (who are also developed countries) of the post-World War II era, and middle-powers of the post-Cold War era which include developing countries that have emerged as strong powers in their respective regions. The common characteristics of middle-powers as elaborated by Cooper (1997:8-9) include: they act in support of the international system to create and maintain world order; since they cannot act alone, they mostly work through international institutions as alliances of small groups; they act as mediators; they emphasise coalition building and co-operation building; they demonstrate a certain degree of entrepreneurial and/or technical leadership; and they work as catalysts and facilitators on selective issues.

While the elements of middle-power characterisation remain the same for the different eras, Schoeman (2000:3) argues that an additional distinguishing factor for post-Cold War middle-powers is that these countries are also regional-powers in their own respective regions.

Although the emergence of the IBSA Dialogue Forum does not classically conform with main International Relations Theories, the study has, however, attempted to use the variants of both Realism (the balance of power

perspective of neorealism) and Liberalism (institutional perspective) to contextualise the subject matter.

Consistent with the balance of power perspective, IBSA countries allied themselves to counter balance the dominance of the North, led by the USA. While it is accepted that these countries' individual or collective power capabilities cannot rival that of the USA, Flesher (2008:14) argues that IBSA countries employ non-military tactics and strategies to block and constrain US dominance and unilateral policies. These tactics which Paul (2005) refers to as 'soft balancing' are institutional strategies such as coalition building and promoting co-operation especially in multilateral forums, aimed at constraining the dominant power. Flesher (2008:14) adds that soft balancing also involves the strengthening of economic ties between middle-powers in an effort to tilt the balance of economic power against the powerful.

The study also showed that the posture of IBSA countries in global governance debates is in line with the institutional perspective of Liberalism. As middle-powers, IBSA countries make use of international institutions to assert their interests because international institutions provide space for middle-powers to advance their normative agendas and distributive aspirations.

The third chapter of the study examined the origins of the IBA Dialogue Forum. This is widely attributed to post-Apartheid South Africa which advocated the formation of the G-7 of the South in order to counter-balance the strength and power of the G-7 industrialised countries. Although the G-South concept was conceived to involve seven key developing countries in order to mirror the G7 at the time, only South Africa, India, and Brazil emerged as a concrete alliance. It was noted that the three countries that ultimately formed this alliance were building on a foundation of strong bilateral relations amongst themselves as well as their common democratic credentials.

The chapter introduced the agenda of IBSA which has crystallised around four pillars, namely (i) Political Consultations; (ii) Trilateral co-operation agenda; (iii) Multilateral co-ordination agenda; and (iv) the IBSA Trust Fund. It examined the current institutionalisation of the IBSA Dialogue Forum which is a Trilateral Commission at Summit level, supported by the Foreign Ministers who in turn are supported by Focal Points located in each Foreign Ministry at senior officials' level. The IBSA Trilateral Commission meets annually and the IBSA Focal points are responsible for co-ordinating the IBSA sectoral programmes at national-level and feeding processes to the Ministers. The Foreign Ministers convene Ministerial-level commissions and present the outcomes to Summit-level meetings. It was noted that IBSA countries also engage in consultations on the margins of multilateral meetings, with the annual United General Assemblies being the most used platform. The attendant risks posed by the loose institutionalisation of IBSA are also underlined, chief amongst which is loss of focus and momentum.

The chapter provided a brief characterisation of IBSA countries using various economic, social, and political indicators. The characterisation noted that the IBSA Dialogue Forum is not an agreement amongst equals but is a forum of countries with different resources and capabilities that are brought together by a common purpose of seeking to promote multilateralism and a co-operative focus in response to challenges of globalisation.

The foreign policy thrusts of these countries were also examined. Although these countries' foreign policies projected much of their national interests, some convergences were identified and were assessed as playing a significant role in the advancement of the objectives of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in all four pillars of co-operation.

The fourth chapter examined the architecture of the trilateral co-operation. It also evaluated the opportunities and challenges of the 16 IBSA sectoral working groups in order to determine the quantitative and qualitative benefits of trilateral cooperation. It was recognised that the establishment of 16 sectoral working groups was a significant strategic and operational aspect of

the IBSA trilateral co-operation agenda. These working groups were established at different periods since the inception of IBSA.

The strategic value and benefit of some working groups was found not to be limited to IBSA countries alone but expanded to their respective regions and in some cases, to these countries' multilateral engagements.

It was also noted that some working groups have maintained good progress in their activities but some working groups have lagged behind. This was mainly attributed to the loose institutionalisation of IBSA without a fixed Secretariat which could have assisted a great deal in obviating the risk of lost momentum due to the turnover of Heads of Focal Points. The IBSA countries' different diplomatic styles were also identified as a contributing factor to the uneven momentum and progress in the performance of the working groups.

The chapter also assessed the extent to which the trilateral co-operation pillar of the IBSA Dialogue Forum conforms to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the emergence of IBSA. It was established that IBSA countries are both regional- and middle-powers as posited in the theoretical chapter. The IBSA countries' possession of power resources and the choice and employment of their foreign policy instruments to advance their aspirations have demonstrated their regional-power status. The strengthening of regional co-operation and in particular economic ties through sectoral co-operation is seen to be consistent with the balance of power theory from a realist perspective. This views the behaviour of middle-powers who, because of their limited hegemonic leverage, strengthen economic ties in an effort to tilt the balance of power against a dominant power such as the USA.

The chapter concluded by confirming the importance and attendant benefits of trilateral sectoral co-operation amongst the three countries. It highlighted the opportunities presented by the trilateral co-operation in becoming a formidable South-South modality whose benefits transcend IBSA countries and resonate into the rest of the developing South as already demonstrated by few sectoral programmes that already have such reach.

Chapter 5 examined the scope of IBSA's multilateral agenda and its manifestations as driven by IBSA Heads of State and Government and assessed the constraints and challenges faced by IBSA in advancing this agenda. The chapter highlighted the importance of the global governance system in strengthening the voice of the South as well as promoting the economic agenda of the South which has underpinned IBSA's activism in multilateral forums.

While IBSA pronounced itself on a myriad of global governance issues during their Summits, the chapter identified a few thematic areas in which IBSA displayed visible and robust activism including pushing for co-ordinated positions in order to strengthen their voice. The identified thematic areas were used as case studies to assess the opportunities and challenges that exist in IBSA's trilateral co-operation and co-ordination on multilateral issues.

The chapter showed that the impact of IBSA's activism in all identified thematic areas was varied and depended on topical issues at hand. There were instances where IBSA countries came together to drive certain issues and positions but in other cases they had to co-operate with other like-minded countries to drive issues in order to achieve better impact. The chapter also showed that IBSA countries did not always speak or act with one voice and accord. This has been attributed to the countries' divergent national interests.

The chapter demonstrated how IBSA countries advanced their redistributive aspirations and normative agenda in global governance debates. It showed how these countries projected themselves as both regional- and middle-powers and how their behaviour was consistent with the balance of power and institutional theories of neorealism, and institutional liberalism, respectively.

The India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum represents a new incarnation of South-South co-operation that is, in practice, fundamentally different from the old platforms and initiatives such as the G-77, the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), and the New International Economic Order (NIEO). Members of G-77

and NAM as well as proponents of the NIEO represent countries that emerged from the colonialism, which took a very strong anti-colonialism stance, and advocated a new international economic world order that took into account the socio-economic development agenda of the South. While these countries had moral influence in the post-colonial era, they were however weak economically and largely depended on the developed North for development aid (Vieira, 2012:311).

IBSA countries, on the other hand, have emerged as economically stronger countries and regional leaders who are using their normative influence and assets and collective capacity to boldly challenge the North in global governance debates while at the same time strengthening co-operation amongst themselves and providing development co-operation assistance to other developing countries.

Vieira (2011:509) argues that these countries' common personality on the international stage derives from the South's persistent critique of the current global order and their advocacy for a more meaningful and substantive development agenda for the South. He adds that the use of "the South" was for IBSA a mobilising symbol and an ideological expression of the shared development challenges facing their governments and societies.

The IBSA countries have through the IBSA Trust Fund as well as their respective national development frameworks emerged as providers of development assistance to other developing countries. The aid and assistance modalities of IBSA and other developing countries such as China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, amongst others, differ from the stringent and overbearing conditionalities that come with the North's approach. The countries of the South rather provide development assistance based on the principle of South-South solidarity.

In the decade of its existence, the IBSA Dialogue Forum has become a profound point of reference, even in an experimental sense, of how profound an impact these countries' co-operation framework at trilateral sectoral co-



operation level as well as on global governance issues can have in the reordering of the international economic and political order.

Vieira (2011:322) notes that Western powers are already adapting to the new international realignment brought about by the redistributive justice objectives advanced by emerging developing countries including the IBSA countries. He cites a July 2010 blue-print released by the British government which stressed the need to engage more forcefully with Southern powers in order to seek their views in tackling global challenges. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also embarked on an engagement strategy with key emerging countries, including IBSA, with a view to seeking their input and views in the execution of its work and programmes<sup>110</sup>.

A critical issue for reflection is whether IBSA can sustain the current operational scope of its co-operation agenda and at the same time remain politically and strategically effective. The study has shown that IBSA has been pursuing ambitious agendas both at trilateral sectoral co-operation and multilateral co-operation levels. If both these agendas are to be fully implemented as presented, it would require IBSA to considerably stretch itself diplomatically, politically, and materially in order to achieve any enduring and tangible results. A question that arises then is whether these countries are capable of committing to such prioritisation without overstretching themselves. Moreover, the IBSA Dialogue Forum is but one of several co-operation mechanisms that these countries have with their respective regional and international partners.

On the side of global governance co-ordination, the study established that IBSA countries were dealing with a wide scope of thematic issues which require considerable diplomatic resources and the employment of different strategies and tactics in order to achieve and maintain effectiveness. Success here was not registered in all the thematic areas since IBSA countries at times had to resort to “real-politik” in dealing with some issues while in other cases

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<sup>110</sup> Enhanced engagement partners, also referred to as key partners include India, Brazil South Africa, China and Indonesia. [www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/](http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/) Accessed on 4 April 2014.

they had to work within wider coalitions within the G-77 in order to advance some positions.

It is submitted that in order for the IBSA Dialogue Forum to be effective, a conscious and pragmatic rationalisation of its overall agenda would be required. One of the considerations in the trilateral sectoral co-operation agenda is to develop some criteria for the selection and elimination of the sectors. The criteria could include the following elements:

- identify sectors which could be regarded as anchor areas for the strengthening and maximisation of trilateral co-operation amongst the three countries;
- identify sectors that could advance the principles of South-South co-operation and which could be replicated in other developing countries;
- identify cross-cutting issues that can be clustered into a single programme or sector and provide the requisite resources to support it;
- evaluate of those sectors that would still thrive outside the trilateral co-operation agenda which can be pursued through the existing bilateral mechanisms; and
- identify the sectors that could easily be addressed and supported within the multilateral agenda rather than the sectoral co-operation agenda.

This rationalisation could assist the IBSA Dialogue Forum to deploy its resources where they will be better utilised in order to maximise its impact and effectiveness.

On the global governance agenda, a rationalisation would also be useful taking into account the multidimensional nature of multilateral negotiations. It is recommended that IBSA countries make a determination of issues of mutual interest that they can collectively advance; as well as identify issues where they can work within coalitions for maximum impact. This rationalisation would also assist in ensuring that diplomatic resources are expended judiciously and tactfully.

Finally, this analysis would be incomplete without an assessment of the IBSA *versus* BRICS debate. The emergence of the BRICS grouping, (which initially comprised Brazil, Russia, India and China [BRIC] with South Africa only joining late in 2010) also stimulates some theorisation in light of its institutionalisation at Summit level in Russia in June 2009. The “BRIC” concept started as an economic construct coined by Jim O’Neill, a Goldman Sachs economist in 2003 in its paper “Dreaming with BRICS: The Path to 2050”<sup>111</sup>. The BRIC countries seek to create a new global architecture in light of the global economic crisis that started in the United States of America. The call for the Summit of the BRICs was made by the Russian and Brazilian Presidents following a State visit to Brazil in November 2008. According to a statement of 26 November 2008 by Reuters, the two Heads of States reportedly called for the first Summit of BRICs in 2009<sup>112</sup>.

At its initiation, the BRIC grouping brought together four major emerging economies that saw a niche in ameliorating the effects of an unfolding global economic crises and came together to seek common solutions. South Africa was admitted to the BRIC grouping in 2010 amidst much speculation and argument for and against joining the grouping. The most prevalent argument against the joining the BRICs is the smaller size of the South African economy which is a major distinguishing factor amongst other BRIC countries. However, the inclusion of South Africa in BRICs provides legitimacy to the grouping as it reflects the geographic representation of the African continent. Geostrategic imperatives also placed South Africa in a stronger position than other hopeful African countries such as Egypt and Nigeria. The inclusion of South Africa therefore brought in an important economic power from the African continent into the BRIC bloc.

Drawing on the conceptualisation of middle-powers, in particular Cooper’s (1997:8-9) characterisation, the BRICS can be regarded as middle-powers as well. They seek to advance their goals of the reform of the global economic agenda through their activism and collective action in international institutions

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<sup>111</sup> Dreaming with BRICS: The Path to 2050. Paper No.99 , Goldman Sachs Research Centre

<sup>112</sup> Reuters statement “ Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his Brazilian Counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called on Wednesday for the first Summit of major emerging market countries known as BRICs in Russia next year” 26 November 2008

such as the IMF and the G-20. While the BRICs pronounced themselves on the several issues on global governance agenda in the June 2009 Joint Statement, greater emphasis was placed on the global economic agenda which took 25 percent of the entire statement – with some proposed actions.<sup>113</sup>

The implications for dual membership of India, Brazil and South Africa in the IBSA Forum and BRICS may not be fully fathomed at this early stage. However, the following considerations may need further reflection, namely;

- The BRICS is not a homogeneous group politically compared to the IBSA Forum. The IBSA Dialogue Forum comprises three institutionalised democracies that are also emerging regional-powers. BRICS, on the other hand, have a three functioning democracies (India, Brazil and South Africa), a hybrid of socialist with capitalist features but not democratic people's republic (China), and a “guided democracy” with authoritarian features (Russia) (Armijio, 2007:2).
- Another distinguishing factor is that the power projections of IBSA countries are those of soft powers underpinned by democratic institutions which confer some legitimacy. However, the same cannot be said about the BRICS grouping given the democratic deficit in the governments and institutions of Russia and China. This aspect could somewhat limit this grouping's collective voice in asserting itself in certain fundamental aspects of global governance that call for strong and unequivocal positions.
- The IBSA Dialogue Forum is inherently normative both at global and trilateral co-operation levels with an organised strategic and instrumental agenda. The BRICS grouping may be instrumental but it has a narrow focus which is slowly edging towards a normative agenda. BRICS can also not compare with IBSA regarding the internal chemistry that exists in the latter's dynamic engagement.

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<sup>113</sup> Joint Statement of the BRIC countries leaders. 16 June 2009

Whether IBSA and BRICS are complementary or competitive is a subject of another study, However, in this study, it is trusted that the credentials and the *raison d'être* of IBSA have been firmly established.

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