

Plans for the BRICS South Africa Summit March 26-27, 2013

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
G20	Group of 20 (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union)
IMF	International Monetary Fund

Preface

This report on “Plans for the 2013 BRICS Summit” draws from public sources to aid researchers and other stakeholders interested in the BRICS summit. It thus focuses on the political and diplomatic aspects of the BRICS as a plurilateral summit institution, and includes material on the physical summit, South Africa’s preparations and other BRICS-related meetings. It is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Introduction: Durban 2013 BRICS Summit

South Africa will host the fifth BRICS summit in Durban from March 26-27, 2013. The summit will cover issues, including trade, the global economy, agriculture, health and innovation, terrorism, climate change, food and energy security. Specifics and additional issue areas will be identified as South Africa develops the agenda. The summit will be held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban.¹ The official website is: <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/>

The first summit was held in 2009 in Russia, with the leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). The same four leaders met for the second summit in Brazil in 2010. In 2011, with China as the host, South Africa attended for the first time. In 2012 India hosted the fourth summit with the leaders of all five BRICS countries.

As expressed by the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane on September 11, 2012, South Africa’s membership to BRICS is based on three pillars, namely: to advance South Africa’s national interests; to promote regional integration and related infrastructure programmes and to partner with key players of the South on issues of global governance reforms.² (September 11, 2012, BRICS Information Centre)

¹ High Commission of South Africa in India, (October 5, 2012), <http://southafricainindia.wordpress.com/2012/10/05/brics-summit-march-2013-durban-south-africa/>

² BRICS Information Centre, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa Speech presented at The New Age Business Briefing (September 11, 2012), “South Africa’s Role in BRICS, and Its Benefits to Job Creation and the Infrastructure Drive in South Africa.” <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120911-nkoana-mashabane.html>.

Agenda

Priority Themes

The proposed theme of the fifth BRICS Summit is “BRICS and Africa – Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation,” to share the event with the African continent.³ (November 20, 2012, Official website)

Three priorities have been outlined as South Africa’s agenda for the BRICS forum. Firstly, BRICS members have a shared interest in the reform of multilateral institutions specifically the World Trade Organisation’s Doha Round. Secondly, to build intra-BRICS cooperation in trade and investment and finally South Africa prioritized BRICS cooperation to support Africa’s economic development agenda.⁴ (October 18, 2012, Official website)

BRICS leaders defined the BRICS forum as a platform for dialogue and cooperation to promote peace, security and development in a multipolar, interdependent and increasingly complex, globalising world. Further, BRICS countries are striving to enhance inclusive economic growth to lead to an increase in the creation of decent and sustainable jobs, and advance the fight against poverty.⁵ (September 11, 2012, BRICS Information Centre)

BRICS Summits are convened to seek common ground on areas of importance for these major economies. It represents spheres of political and entrepreneurial coordination, in which member countries have identified several business opportunities, economic complementarities, and other areas of cooperation.⁶ (October 5, 2012, High Commission of South Africa in India)

Global Governance Reform

On October 19, 2012, South African Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies reiterated that BRICS countries have a shared interest in pushing for the reform of the World Trade Organization’s Doha Round to defend and champion a development outcome.⁷ (October 19, 2012, All Africa)

³ Presidential website (November 20, 2012), “Statement by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, on international developments, with specific focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict, Imbizo Media Centre, Parliament, Cape Town.” <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/statement-by-the-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-ms-maite-nkoana-mashabane-on-international-developments-with-specific-focus-on-the-israel-palestine-conflict-imbizo-media-centr/>

⁴ Presidential Website (October 18, 2012), “BRICS should contribute to Africa’s and Emerging Economies and Developing Countries (EMDC) development.” <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/media-release-brics-should-contribute-to-africas-and-emerging-economies-and-developing-countries-emdc-development/>.

⁵ BRICS Information Centre, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa Speech presented at The New Age Business Briefing (September 11, 2012), “South Africa’s Role in BRICS, and Its Benefits to Job Creation and the Infrastructure Drive in South Africa.” <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120911-nkoana-mashabane.html>.

⁶ High Commission of South Africa in India (October 5, 2012), <http://southafricainindia.wordpress.com/2012/10/05/brics-summit-march-2013-durban-south-africa/>

⁷ All Africa (October 19, 2012), “A voice for emerging economies.”

BRICS leaders jointly pledged additional funding of US\$75 billion to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for the firewall fund. China pledged US\$43 billion, Brazil, India and Russia US\$10 billion each and South Africa US\$2 billion. The pledges were contingent on the completion of the IMF quota review and aligned with the vision to transform institutions of global governance.⁸ (September 11, 2012, BRICS Information Centre)

BRICS Development Bank

The BRICS members are likely to finalize the structure of a development bank to fund infrastructure at summit in Durban in March. However, it has been projected that the bank, might not start functioning before 2014, with substantially less initial capital than the \$240 billion originally thought. Finance ministers were meant to finalize the structure in February to be formalized and agreed upon by the leaders at the summit.⁹ (January 9, 2013, Business Standard)

On January 21, 2013, it has been proposed that the governments of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa could each make an initial capital injection of \$10 billion to fund the BRICS Development bank.¹⁰ (January 21, 2013, China Daily)

BRICS member countries continue to show their support for the BRICS Development Bank, Chinese Vice Finance Minister Zhu Guangyao reiterated that it is an important decision for the future of South-South cooperation, to help boost infrastructure construction in developing countries, and reform the world economic structure and governance mechanisms¹¹. (November 6, 2012, Xinhua News Agency)

The BRICS Development Bank technical expert working group has held two meetings in August and October 2012. The technical working group will provide next report in the lead up for the summit in March¹² (October 24, 2012, Official website)

At the 2012 New Delhi Summit, the BRICS group agreed on strategy to potentially develop a BRICS development bank (a BRICS-led South-South development bank), funded and managed by the BRICS nations and other developing countries to facilitate long-term investment opportunities. On the sidelines of the 2012 G20 summit in Mexico, BRICS leaders discussed the possibility of setting up a currency swap arrangement and a foreign exchange reserve pool. The foreign exchange reserve pool would act as a financial safety net, to be used in case any member

⁸ BRICS Information Centre, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa Speech presented at The New Age Business Briefing (September 11, 2012), "South Africa's Role in BRICS, and Its Benefits to Job Creation and the Infrastructure Drive in South Africa." <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120911-nkoana-mashabane.html>.

⁹ Beniwal, Vrishti, (January 9, 2013), "Contours of BRICS bank to be finalised in March."

¹⁰ China Daily, (January 21, 2013), "Development Bank Expands BRICS Platform."
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2013-02/21/content_16241891.htm

¹¹ Liang Xizhi, Xinhua News Agency (November 6, 2012), Interview: G20 recognizes Europe's progress in resolving debt crisis: Chinese official

¹² BRICS Presidential website, Address by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim I Ebrahim (October 24, 2012), "Reflections on BRICS: Prospects for South Africa and Africa."

<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/address-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-i-ebrahim-on-the-occasion-of-a-public-lecture-titled-reflections-on-brics-prospects-for-south-africa/>

country was faced with sudden restriction of capital. South African Minister Rob Davies stated that the South African government is of the view that the BRICS led Development Bank should mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries.¹³ (October 18, 2012, Official website)

South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane reiterated BRICS leader's consideration on the possibility of setting up a new development bank. The BRICS leaders directed their finance ministers to examine the feasibility and viability of the initiative, to set up a joint working group and report back at the next summit.¹⁴ (September 11, 2012, BRICS Information Centre)

Africa

On September 11, 2012, South African Minister Nkoana-Mashabane highlighted that at the 2011 BRICS Sanya Summit and the 2012 New Delhi Summit, BRICS leaders expressed support for infrastructure development in Africa and industrialisation within the framework of NEPAD as well as to economic growth that supports development and stability in Africa.¹⁵ (September 11, 2012, Department of International Relations and Cooperation)

South African Minister Rob Davies expressed that South Africa has a direct interest in extending BRICS cooperation to support Africa's development agenda, particularly by "increasing financial aid to build infrastructure and industrial capacity, and increasing imports of value-added manufactured products from the continent."¹⁶ (October 19, 2012, All Africa)

Food and Agriculture

Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development of the BRIC countries met for the first time in Moscow on March 26, 2010 and reached consensus for agricultural cooperation. To implement the consensus the First Meeting of BRICS Agricultural Cooperation Working Group was held in Beijing, China in August 2011. The meeting unanimously agreed to formulate the Action Plan on Agricultural Cooperation of the BRICS countries for the period of 2012-2016, which was then approved at the Second Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development. The countries will establish an annual calendar of activities which will take into consideration the principles adopted at the Action Plan.

¹³ Presidential Website (October 18, 2012), "BRICS should contribute to Africa's and Emerging Economies and Developing Countries (EMDC) development."

<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/media-release-brics-should-contribute-to-africas-and-emerging-economies-and-developing-countries-emdc-development/>

¹⁴ BRICS Information Centre, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa Speech presented at The New Age Business Briefing (September 11, 2012), "South Africa's Role in BRICS, and Its Benefits to Job Creation and the Infrastructure Drive in South Africa." <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120911-nkoana-mashabane.html>.

¹⁵ BRICS Information Centre, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa Speech presented at The New Age Business Briefing (September 11, 2012), "South Africa's Role in BRICS, and Its Benefits to Job Creation and the Infrastructure Drive in South Africa." <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2012/mash0911a.html>

¹⁶ All Africa (October 19, 2012), "A voice for emerging economies."

The Action Plan commits BRICS members to; create a basic agricultural information exchange system of BRICS countries and will be coordinated by China. To development a general strategy for ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable population and will be coordinated by Brazil. To reduce the negative impact of climate change on food security and adaptation of agriculture to climate change and will be coordinated by South Africa. To enhance agricultural technology cooperation and innovation and will be coordinated by India. The promotion of trade and investment will be coordinated by Russia.¹⁷ (Official website)

Process: The Physical Summit

The conference venues, transport infrastructure and accommodation options in Durban have positioned the city as the ideal host for BRICS. All of the sessions will be held at the world-class Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC), centrally located close to Durban's beaches and hotels, and just a half-hour drive from King Shaka International Airport. The ICC has been named Africa's leading convention centre in the World Travel Awards nine times since 2001, and ranks among the World's top 10 convention centres. It has also won the award for the most Environmentally-Conscious Congress Centre by the European Inventive and Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition. The ICC, including the Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC), the Arena and the paved inter-leading concourse area, can accommodate more than 20 000 delegates. www.icc.co.za¹⁸ (Official website)

South African International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim announced that the BRICS Summit will be held in Durban, South Africa on March 26-27, 2013 and that preparations are underway.¹⁹ (October 9, 2012, All Africa Global Media)

BRICS Think Tank Forum

Department of International Relations and Cooperation will be partnering with the Department of Higher Education and Training with Higher Education South Africa (HESA) to host the fifth BRICS Academic Forum, a few weeks prior to the summit.²⁰ (October 29, 2012, Official website)

South African BRICS Sherpa, Ambassador Jerry Matjila also the Director General, Department of International Relations and Cooperation met with stakeholders to discuss how South Africa will create its own dedicated BRICS Think-Tank. Brazil, Russia, India and China already have dedicated BRICS Think-Tanks. The think tanks will provide "a general academic evaluation and future long-term strategy for BRICS."²¹ (October 24, 2012, Official website)

¹⁷ Presidential website, "BRICS Agricultural Action."

<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/about-brics/sectorial-declaration/agriculture-ministers-meeting/brics-agricultural-action/>

¹⁸ Presidential website, "BRICS at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC)."

¹⁹ All Africa Global Media (October 9, 2012), "BRICS Summit Preparations Under way."

²⁰ Presidential website (October 29, 2012), "Media statement by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim, on developments in the international relations field."
<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/media-statement-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-ebrahim-on-developments-in-the-international-relations-field-29-october-2012/>

²¹ Presidential website, Address by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim I Ebrahim (October 24, 2012), "Reflections on BRICS : Prospects for South Africa and Africa."

A BRICS Think Tank Forum was held in China on September 26, 2012. The theme was Adjustment, Innovation and Cooperation and included 40 experts from all BRICS countries. During the two day meeting, a consensus was reached to move forward and create a BRICS development bank to complement existing global financial institutions like World Bank and that the creation of a bank is necessary and practical. There was no official report released but the consensus reached will formulate the discussion for the next BRICS Think Tank Forum, to be held in South Africa before the 2013 BRICS Summit.²² (October 2, 2012, Firstpost Economy)

Business

The fourth annual Africa and South East Asia (AfricSEA) Business Forum took place on November 1-2, 2012 at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg. The forum has partnered with the BRICS 2013 team from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation to place Africa as an investment destination and to explore how Africa interacts with the BRICS in the context of strengthening South-South cooperation.²³ (October 29, 2012, Official website)

Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ebrahim Ebrahim announced that in the lead up to the fifth BRICS summit, various business meetings will take place to further some of the projects President Zuma proposed at the last New Delhi Summit, namely the project to develop a high-capacity marine cable system linking the BRICS countries.²⁴ (October 24, 2012, Official website)

In June 2012, the CEO of Business Unity South Africa Nomaxabiso Majokweni told an African National Congress (ANC) business forum that an immediate benefit of a BRICS bank would be “a massive injection in our infrastructure development plan, which could help the government meet some of its very ambitious growth targets.”²⁵ (June 26, 2012, South Africa Info)

Other Events

In the lead up to South Africa hosting the BRICS Summit in March 2013, various South African Ministers are attending roadshows to raise awareness around the importance of South Africa’s

<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/address-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-i-ebrahim-on-the-occasion-of-a-public-lecture-titled-reflections-on-brics-prospects-for-south-africa/>

²² Firstpost Economy (October 2, 2012), “BRICS think tanks agree on setting up development bank.”

<http://www.firstpost.com/economy/brics-think-tanks-agree-on-setting-up-development-bank-476634.html>

²³ Presidential website (October 29, 2012), “Media statement by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim, on developments in the international relations field.”

<http://www.brics5.co.za/site/media-statement-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-ebrahim-on-developments-in-the-international-relations-field-29-october-2012>

²⁴ Presidential website, Address by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim I Ebrahim (October 24, 2012), “Reflections on BRICS : Prospects for South Africa and Africa.” <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/address-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-i-ebrahim-on-the-occasion-of-a-public-lecture-titled-reflections-on-brics-prospects-for-south-africa/>

²⁵ South Africa Info (June 26, 2012), “BRICS bank to boost South Africa.”

membership of the BRICS. The Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Derek Hanekom, and the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson who both also serve as members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on BRICS, will address Gauteng's BRICS roadshow and the Northern Cape Province's BRICS roadshow, respectively.²⁶ (Official website, January 21, 2013)

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim, will participate in a public debate organised by ActionAid, "BRICS: Paradigm shift or more of the same?" on 28 February 2013, at the Women's Gaol, Constitutional Hill, Braamfontein.²⁷ (Official website February 27, 2013)

BRICS Meetings

March 26-27, 2013	BRICS Durban Summit
March 25, 2013	BRICS Trade Ministers meeting
March 25, 2013	BRICS Business Forum
March 25, 2013	BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism
March 13-16, 2013	BRICS Foundry Forum
March 10-13, 2013	BRICS Academic Forum
January 11, 2013	BRICS Health Ministers meeting
January 10, 2013	National Security Advisors meeting
September 26, 2012	BRICS foreign/international relations ministers
September 19, 2012	South African Cabinet meeting

BRICS Health Ministers Meeting

The BRICS Health Ministers held the 2nd Health Ministers' meeting in New Delhi, India on January 11, 2013. The declaration included a call for strengthened cooperation in the implementation of affordable, equitable and sustainable solutions for common health challenges. The concluding declaration included paragraphs on non-communicable disease, and mental health, communicable disease, tuberculosis, malaria, HIV and reaffirmed support for multiple international agreements and conventions such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco control.

The health ministers addressed the severity of these health concerns and cited the need for prevention and cost-effective monitoring and treatment. They resolved to continue cooperation on health within the Technical Working Group and the important role of information communication technologies to address health challenges. The meeting closed with the announcement that the

²⁶ Presidential website, BRICS (January 21, 2013), "Media Advisory: First BRICS RoadShow Takes Place in Polokwane, Limpopo Province"
<http://www.brics5.co.za/media-advisory-first-brics-roadshow-takes-place-in-polokwane-limpopo-province/>

²⁷ Presidential website, (February 27, 2013), Deputy Minister Ebrahim to Participate in a Public Debate on BRICS at Constitutional Hill, Braamfontein."
<http://www.brics5.co.za/deputy-minister-ebrahim-to-participate-in-a-public-debate-on-brics-at-constitutional-hill-braamfontein/>

next BRICS Health Ministerial meeting will be hosted by South Africa in January 2014.²⁸ (BRICS Information Centre, January 11, 2013)

BRICS National Security Advisors

The National Security Advisors (NSAs) of BRICS members held the first stand-alone meeting in Delhi, India on January 10, 2013. The discussions concentrated on regional and global developments, specifically West Asia and North Africa, including Syria, Libya, and Mali. When discussing Syria, the NSA agreed that the Syrian people are to choose their future and that the international community can only be a facilitator. They discussed the need to increase cooperation on issues of cyber security, terrorism and piracy and they prioritised the security agenda for the 5th BRICS summit in Durban. Finally. They also discussed the idea of a BRICS bank for infrastructure development.²⁹ (Russia and India Report, January 14, 2013)

BRICS Foreign/International Relations Ministers

The South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane chaired the annual meeting of BRICS foreign/international relations ministers in New York on September 26, 2012, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Ministers discussed multiple issues and condemned the increasing human rights violations in Syria. They called for immediate cease fire and the establishment of a multi-stakeholder political reconciliation process with the support of the international community. They reiterated support to the work of Joint UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, as well as to the Joint Communiqué of the Geneva Action Group. 30 (September 27, 2012, Official website)

South African Cabinet Meeting

On September 19, 2012 the South African Cabinet meeting approved the BRICS Strategy for South Africa. It also activated the structures to oversee preparations for the fifth BRICS Summit. The main structures are the BRICS Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which held its first meeting on October 2, 2012 and is to provide policy guidance to the Cabinet on hosting the summit, the BRICS Inter-Departmental Technical Senior Officials' Team (IDTSOT) and the BRICS Inter-Departmental Logistics Team, which has held weekly meetings since June 2012.³¹ (October 9, 2012, Official website)

²⁸ BRICS Information Centre, (January 11, 2013), "BRICS Health Ministers' Communiqué." <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/130111-health.html>

²⁹ Sharma, Rajeev, Russia and India Report, (January 14, 2013), "BRICS NSAs thrash out security agenda for Durban Summit." http://indrus.in/articles/2013/01/14/brics_nsas_thrash_out_security_agenda_for_durban_summit_21597.html

³⁰ Presidential Website (September 27, 2012), "BRICS Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs." <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/brics-meeting-of-ministers-of-foreign-affairs/>

³¹ Presidential Website, Statement by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim, to the media briefing on the fifth Brazil, Russia, India, Russia, South Africa (BRICS) Summit and the donation to Palestine refugees (October 9, 2012), <http://www.brics5.co.za/site/statement-by-the-deputy-minister-of-international-relations-and-cooperation-mr-ebrahim-ebrahim-to-the-media-briefing-on-the-fifth-brics-summit-9-october-2012/>

South Africa's Summit Team

- Jacob Zuma, President
- Ambassador Jerry Matjila, South African Sherpa
- Pravin Jamnadas Gordha, Minister of Finance
- Maite Emily Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation
- Tina Joemat-Peterson, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Health
- Rob Davies, Minister of Trade and Industry

Participating Leaders

Brazil's Dilma Rousseff was elected the 36th president of Brazil on October 31, 2010, and inaugurated on January 1, 2011. In 2002, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva appointed her minister of energy. In 2005, she became chief of staff and remained in office until March 31, 2010, until stepping down to run for president. She was born in Minas Gerais, Brazil, on December 14, 1947. Rousseff studied economics at the Minas Gerais Federal University School of Economics and did postgraduate studies in economics at the Campinas State University. She is divorced from Carlos Franklin Paixão de Araújo, with whom she has one child. Rousseff has participated in every BRICS summit to date.

China's Xi Jinping was elected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on November 15, 2012, replacing Hu Jintao who had held the position since 2003. Xi was appointed vice-president in March 2008. He was appointed to the Standing Committee of the 17th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Politburo in October 2007. In 1982, Xi began serving in numerous local party and provincial positions, first in Hebei, and then in Fujian, including serving as deputy provincial party secretary of Fujian from 1995 until 2002. From 1999 to 2002, Xi served first as acting and then governor of Fujian. In 2002, Xi served as acting governor and deputy provincial party secretary in Zhejiang. He became provincial party secretary in 2003, and then, as of 2007, held the position of Shanghai party secretary until he was appointed to the Politburo in October. Xi was born in Fuping, Shaanxi, in 1953, the son of People's Liberation Army veteran and reformist vice premier Xi Zhongxun. Xi earned a degree in chemical engineering and was later awarded a doctorate in law from Tsinghua University in Beijing. Xi is married to opera singer Peng Liyuan and they have one daughter. Durban will be Xi's first BRICS summit.

India's Manmohan Singh was re-elected prime minister of India in May 2009. He was first elected in 2004 when he replaced Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Before entering politics, Singh worked as an economist, including for the International Monetary Fund. He was governor of the Reserve Bank of India from 1982 to 1985. Singh was first elected to the upper house of Indian parliament in 1995. He was re-elected in 2001 and 2007 and held cabinet positions including minister of finance and minister for external affairs. Singh also served as minister of finance from November 2008 to January 2009. He was born in Gah, Punjab (now Chakwal district, Pakistan), on September 26, 1932. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Punjab University in 1952 and 1954. He also received an undergraduate degree from Cambridge University in 1957 and a doctorate from Oxford University in 1962. He and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, have three children. Singh has participated in every BRICS summit, including hosting the 2012 Delhi Summit.

Russia's Vladimir Putin assumed the position of president of the Russian Federation on May 7, 2012. He succeeds Dmitri Medvedev, who had been president since 2008. Putin served as prime minister under Medvedev, having earlier been elected president in 2000 and re-elected in 2004. A member of the United Russia party since its establishment in 2001, he led the party from 2008 until April 2012. From 1998 to 1999, he was director of the Federal Security Service, having worked for the KGB from 1975 to 1991. Putin was born on October 7, 1952 in Leningrad and graduated from Leningrad State University's law faculty. He and his wife, Ludmila, have two daughters. Durban will be Putin's first BRICS summit.

South Africa's Jacob Zuma became president of South Africa on May 9, 2009, succeeding Petrus Kgalema Motlanthe, who had held the position since September 2008. Zuma joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1958 and started serving in its national executive committee in 1977. In 1994, Zuma was elected national chair of the ANC and chair of the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal. He was re-elected to the latter position in 1996 and selected as the deputy president of the ANC in December 1997. Zuma was appointed executive deputy president of South Africa in 1999. He held that position until 2005 and was elected ANC president at the end of 2007. Born on April 12, 1949, in Inkandla, KwaZulu-Natal Province, he has received numerous honorary degrees. He has three wives and several children. Zuma attended his first BRICS summit in Sanya in 2011, when South Africa became a member. Durban is his first summit as host.