

■ SOLIDARITY

SA hands BRICS mantle to Brazil

Country has successfully steered bloc towards improved co-operation as well as amplifying voice of developing countries

ON THE last day of this month, South Africa will hand over its role as chairperson of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa bloc to Brazil, having succeeded to steer BRICS towards improved co-operation and amplifying the voice and influence of emerging markets and developing countries.

The group has irrefutably reaffirmed its support for, and promotion of multilateralism in the global economic and political governance system, particularly with regard to the UN and World Trade Organisation.

As one of the mechanisms through which we implement our foreign policy, the BRICS formation signifies a long-standing tradition of solidarity among developing countries that share common challenges and aspirations.

The highlight of our leadership was our hosting in July 2018 of the 10th BRICS Summit, chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The summit took place under the theme: "BRICS in Africa: Col-

laboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution".

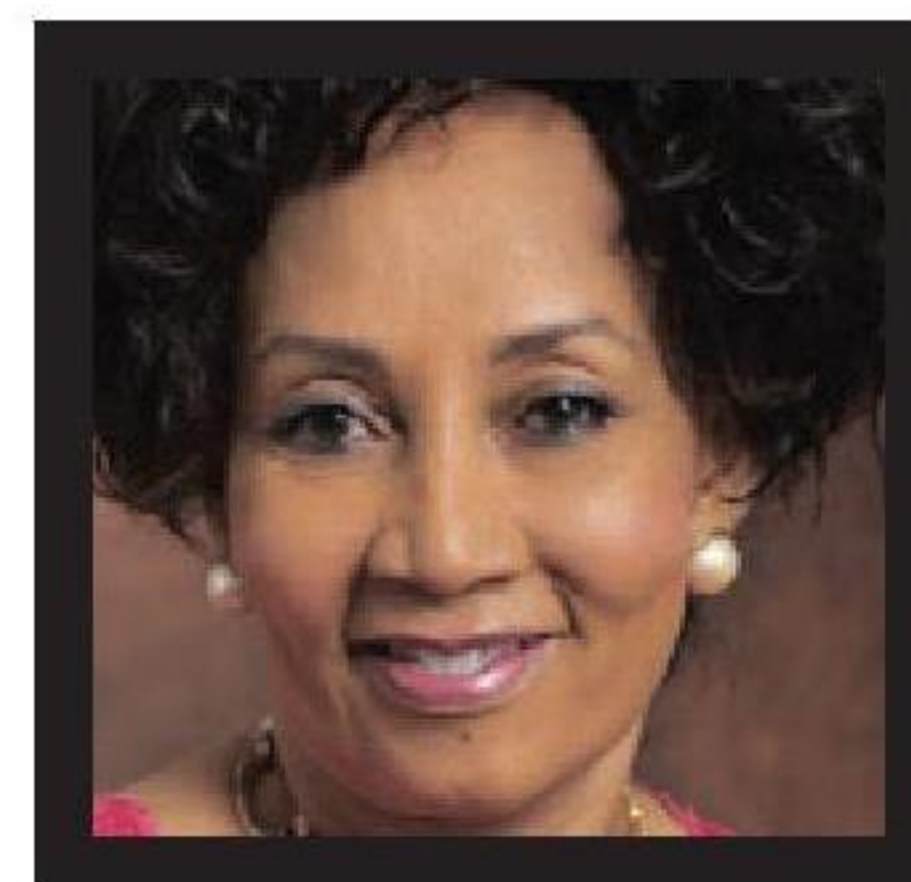
Professor Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum says the Fourth Industrial Revolution "is characterised by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres".

Our response therefore needs to be very comprehensive and integrated. We should be and are embracing new technologies and approaches that are merging the physical, digital and biological worlds.

We are also cognisant of the fact that we can't be mere adopters of new technologies. Instead, we are resolute that we shall combine our resources and expertise to become innovators. This is reflected in the main outcomes of the 10th BRICS Summit.

The outcomes were informed by the priorities as identified by South Africa, with the endorsement and sup-

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port of the other partners.

The summit agreed to establish the following mechanisms:

- ◆ BRICS Working Group on the 4th Industrial Revolution;
- ◆ BRICS Network of Science Parks, Technology Business Incubators and SMEs;
- ◆ Vaccine Research Centre to be hosted in South Africa;
- ◆ Working Group on Tourism;
- ◆ Women's Forum and Women's Business Alliance;
- ◆ Working Group on Peacekeeping; and
- ◆ Foreign Spokespersons Platform.

Intra-BRICS co-operation has gained momentum in other areas – finance, agriculture, trade, combating transnational crime, science and technology, health, education and security.

Our linkage of BRICS and Africa was an affirmation of our country's foreign policy outlook which is predicated on our African history and identity. Africans are part of the broader Global South, comprising of countries which were colonised and citizens who were subjugated for a long time.

The BRICS leaders reiterated their collective commitment to a world of peace and stability, the central role of the UN, the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, respect for international law and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law.

BRICS continues to advocate for the comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of the developing

countries so that it can adequately respond to global challenges.

The stance taken by BRICS on UN reforms is an affirmation of our long-held view that the organisation cannot continue to limit the role of the majority of its members – many of whom are African states – on important matters relating to peace and security. On November 30, the BRICS leaders met during the annual informal BRICS Leaders' Meeting on the margins of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they recommitted to further enhance co-operation, building on the achievements registered under South Africa's leadership.

We look forward to the next decade of the BRICS co-operation with hope and excitement. We have worked hard to put together all the mechanisms that should propel BRICS to greater heights and success.

Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation.