



BRICS FEMINIST WATCH

The New Development Bank

The Fortaleza Summit 2014 saw the announcement of the setting up of a multilateral development bank which would enable lending exclusively by the BRICS states. It was earlier called the BRICS bank but was later renamed the New Development Bank. The idea was first proposed in the 2012 summit to create a bank to counter the impact of the Bretton Woods institutions. The setting up of the bank seemed like a natural extension to the idea of BRICS. Having formed post the 2008 global meltdown, one of the main goals of the BRICS coalition has been to advocate for a reform and democratization of the international financial institutions. Over multiple summits, one of the main goals was a demand for a change in the voting and shareholder rights within the IMF and World Bank so as to create more space for developing countries. The idea of BRICS was also to create a way of enabling wealth and opportunity sharing within the South family. The setting up of a BRICS bank in this context was seen as a resistance to the control of international financial institutions by the developed nations.

The bank has an initial capital of \$100 billion which was created through equal sharing by the BRICS countries. Out of this capital, the bank can lend up to \$34 billion per year. Apart from this a **Contingency Reserve Agreement (CRA)** was also created whose role was to create additional liquidity protection for the BRICS countries in times of problems arising from balance payments. The CRA does not work on an equal sharing model. It gets funded 41% by China, 18% each from Brazil, India and Russia and the remaining 5% is from South Africa.

The board of governors comprises of the Ministers of Finance of all the BRICS countries. The board of directors include representatives of the finance ministry of the five countries. The current president of the NDB is K.V. Kamath from India.

The agenda of the bank as understood through its charter shows a hugely conspicuous absence of action towards poverty alleviation which has been the most important aspect of both the World Bank as well as the International Development Bank. There has been an generic reference to infrastructure development and work towards sustainable development. There has however been nothing specified about how the bank intends to achieve this.

The Vice President of the NDB has said that the focus of the bank is on 'accelerating the transition to the green economy'¹. The bank has up till this point given funds towards

renewable energy projects. The first set of loans was approved in April, 2016 wherein \$811 million dollars of loans was sanctioned towards generating 2370 MW of renewable energy. The NDB has also signed a MoU with the Asian Development Bank towards setting out areas of strategic cooperation with respect to mutual goals.

¹<http://tass.com/economy/864578>



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In focussing on energy, there has however been a lack of focus on the gendered aspect of it. M.S Swaminathan says “Gender equality is vital for energy security at the home level. Usually it is women who are in charge of energy management both at home and on the farm. Therefore factoring gender into the analysis of political economy in relation to energy is vital for developing a sustainable energy security system for the family.” Gendering the political economy of fuel allows for a greater participation of women in productive activities. Dependence on fuel based economy also has an impact on the health, safety and education opportunities for women (ibid.). Therefore, the bank's focus on energy needs to necessarily have a gendered analysis.

BRICS has shown a commitment towards the MDGs. It is understood that ending poverty is closely linked to addressing inequalities including gender based inequalities at different levels. In South Africa for instance, there is evidence that 'unless inequality is actively and immediately addressed, more than a million additional people will be pushed into extreme poverty by 2020, notwithstanding strong GDP growth'. Keeping this in mind, it becomes essential for the NDB to address questions of growing inequality in developing nations. Reduction in income inequality has a definite impact on reducing poverty even if there is an absence of economic growth (ibid.).

As has been mentioned, poverty alleviation, does not feature on the agenda of the NDB. Borges and Waisbich (2014) say that 'No global governance model can be truly called “alternative” or “sustainable” without having as its main pillar a rights-based, pro-poor development principle. The international development community cannot fully embrace “solutions” that put more emphasis on justice among states than on justice within states or that exact high costs in terms of social justice and peoples' rights'.

It then becomes absolutely essential for the NDB to commit to a transformational agenda and break away from the traditional international financial models of banking. As the BRICS has committed to address issues of gender inequalities, it must follow that the bank also would be required to have on its agenda the addressing of gender justice .

²<http://www.ndb.int/first-set-of-loans-approved-by-the-board-of-directors-of-the-new-development-bank.php#parentHorizontalTab2>

³<http://www.ndb.int/ndb-adb-sign-mou-on-cooperation-for-sustainable-iclusive-growth.php#parentHorizontalTab2>



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BRICS Feminist Watch along with **CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) Feminist Constituency** have collectively developed this statement for the upcoming BRICS Bank Director's meeting in Delhi.

As feminist, women's rights and gender equality advocates we reaffirm our vision of a **world where aid is no longer necessary**. Where unequal power relations and undemocratic distribution of wealth and structures of injustices all forms of violence and war are transformed to create new forms of relations based on equality, dignity, respect and human rights that enhance solidarity, equity, inclusion, non-subordination and justice for all.

We support gender analysis and resulting recommendations from all previous Women's Conferences including **Beijing Platform for Action** as an essential tool to ensure equality and to end patriarchy in our societies.

We believe **development is a human right** and that international solidarity through sustainable international cooperation has a crucial role to play in fulfilling states' responsibility to ensure that all people including women and girls realise their rights. We believe in redistributive justice and the eradication of all forms of inequalities, including gender, race, caste, ethnicity, rural-urban divides, abilities, age, sexual orientation, occupation etc. Development should ensure 'no woman and girl is left behind'. And we challenge the mainstream economic development models, based on extractivism and the exploitation of resources, including women's bodies, labour and natural resources such as land, to shift the dominant development discourse towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm.

We underscore that women, feminists, women's organisations and women movements play key roles in development at all levels and stress that the full realisation of human rights and women's rights are essential to any development and to any development cooperation framework.

We are deeply concerned about the limited implementation of the commitments made towards gender equality and women's rights by States around the world and therefore call on BRICS governments and other development actors involved in the BRICS **for a stronger commitment with a clear focus on gender equality** and human rights that ensure following imperatives:

- Deepen commitments towards gender equality and human rights and promote an equitable and just development cooperation architecture within BRICS;
- Strengthen development effectiveness through practices based on human rights standards, including women's rights standards;
- Development effectiveness requires **democratic ownership** and the systematic participation of civil society, including feminist and women's rights organizations, at all stages. We notice with concern this is not necessarily happening in BRICS.
- Effective development also requires the strengthening of feminist and women's rights organizing, both in terms of capacities and financial support to promote transformative progress on gender equality and women's rights.
- An **enabling environment** for civil society, including feminist and women's rights organizations, is critical. We noticed with concern the shrinking civil society spaces and that women human rights



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defenders are under attack and face constant threat in many parts of the world. BRICS governments and other stakeholders in development, especially the private sector, must guarantee a safe, secure and enabling environment to all human rights defenders including women human rights defenders. Furthermore, all states have the obligation to implement and respect all provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

- We demand that Inclusive partnership for effective development ensures development justice and recognises and values reproductive and care work, and protects and promote decent work and sustainable forms of livelihoods and ensures women's unmediated right to own and control land, house, new technology and other productive resources. It further recognises care as a public good and a basic right.

We strongly believe that for development cooperation to be effective **results should be based on the progress made to fulfil human rights obligations and include clear deadlines.** BRICS Feminist Watch also demand for development cooperation to eradicate all forms of inequalities, including poverty and all forms of violence against women and girls. To address not just symptoms but structural causes of inequalities including patriarchy by promoting sustainable systematic behaviour change. Development co-operation should fill the infrastructure gaps, and address women's energy and technology needs.

On **transparency and accountability** we note with great concern about the lack of political will to systematically monitor gender equality. And we therefore demand BRICS must develop and strengthen **Gender responsive tracking systems.**

1. As a first step BRICS should establish measures to **integrate a feminist approach** into all its work and structures. Set up an inclusive **multi-stakeholder taskforce**, in partnership with feminist and women's rights advocates from civil society, to address gender equality and women's rights commitments for effective development cooperation
2. Develop, promote and strengthen **multiple accountability systems** for women's rights, and gender equality. Have clear feminist indicators and make gender equality indicators mandatory part of all BRICS development partnerships.
3. All development partners should be held accountable to all agreed commitments including human rights.
4. All development cooperation **monitoring mechanisms** should assess human rights and environmental impacts and risks in a gender sensitive way.
5. External policies, including development, trade and investment should be coherent and aligned with human rights standards, including women's rights standards.
6. All monitoring and regulatory mechanisms must be designed and implemented from a South perspective, and fully adhere to the development realities of global South.
7. Bring all actors including the private sector and South-South Co-operations in line with human rights.
8. Go beyond the economic approach to development and integrate approaches aligned with human rights standards, namely economic and social rights (i.e. ESCR) to ensure nobody is left behind. Go beyond just data and numbers also assess processes. Ensure monitoring is result based and goes beyond gender mainstreaming—e.g. gender budgeting.
9. Promote, and support linking of BRICS monitoring mechanisms to international, and regional human rights mechanisms such as UPR, and treaty bodies (i.e. CEDAW, ICESCR) to hold states accountable to the impact and outcome of the BRICS and development policies.

In the end we reiterate the critical need to set up an inclusive **multi-stakeholder taskforce within BRICS for gender equality.**