

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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Johannesburg – 06 September 2023: In a bid to enable businesses to meet and respond to new and emerging skills challenges, the Skills Development Working Group of the BRICS Council in South Africa will be hosting a skills challenge where hundreds of participants aged between 18 and 35 from BRICS countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, will pit their skills against one another to develop solutions for a range of challenges in various fields.

This annual event which is dubbed the BRICS Future Skills Challenge, will be hosted in line with the outcomes of this year's South Africa's chairmanship for BRICS.

Under the theme: Solving today's problems using tomorrow's technologies, participants in the BRICS Future Skills Challenge will test their skills and expertise in 12 skills areas, namely aircraft maintenance, Agri IoT, Building Information Modelling, Cyber Security, Data Science, Digital Twin, Drone Technologies, Internet Marketing, Manufacturing Robotics, Mobile App Development, Renewable Energy and Robotic Process Automation.

A panel of experts from across the BRICS countries have been assigned to different skills areas to develop and mentor the participants.

Mapule Ncanywa, Chairperson of the BRICS Business Council Skills Group, explains that the rationale behind the BRICS Skills Challenge is to tackle skills development challenges facing BRICS partner countries through benchmarking of emerging and future skills and developing standards that are tested in a public skills challenge.

The BRICS Skills Challenge serves as a platform to collate and provide insights into how the BRICS partners continue to enable businesses by helping them respond to new and emerging skills. It will also enable the participants to help to solve critical challenges using their technical skills, in the thematic areas of Water, Energy and Health.



"This challenge comes hot off the heels of the 2023 BRICS Summit which South Africa hosted in August, and we are hoping this will continue to showcase and educate on the value of the BRICS platform. It is an exciting opportunity for young South Africans to benchmark their skills against their counterparts from other BRICS countries. It is also a great platform for participants to present their solutions to potential investors, and/or gain job experience within the BRICS markets," says Ncanywa.

Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, says the BRICS Future Skills Challenge complements the work his department is doing to develop critical future skills required in the digital economy.

"We are excited to be part of this initiative which is fully aligned with the interventions the department is undertaking to generate scarce, critical skills lists to guide programme offerings in PSET institutions. As the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, we have a responsibility to generate the desired skills required to drive the growth of new industries and to fuel the digitisation of our economy. We look forward to sharing best practise with our BRICS counterparts and to be part of this journey to remodel and align the educational outcomes in our institutions with the demands required by the economy. We are confident that this initiative will serve as a conduit of innovative entrepreneurs and highly skilled workforce for industries, not only in South Africa and the continent but across BRICS countries and beyond," says Dr Nzimande.

The BRICS Future Skills Challenge will take place over four days between 12 and 15 September at Nasrec Expo Centre in the south of Johannesburg. Interested parties can find out more about this event and how to participate by visiting the website: [www.bricsfutureskills.co.za](http://www.bricsfutureskills.co.za)

"To all young techs and interested parties out there, this is your chance to network, to learn and gain experience with industry leaders. The future is best for those who prepare for it," Ncanywa concludes.

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**About BRICS Business Council:**

The BRICS Business Council was created in 2013 at the V<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in Durban, South Africa, bringing together the respective business communities from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The role of the BRICS Business Council is to facilitate business-to-business engagements in the interest of creating tangible trade and investment opportunities between the partner countries.

Learn more at: <https://sabricsbusinesscouncil.co.za/>