SOUTH AFRICAN BRICS BUSINESS COUNCIL (SABBC) UPDATE 4

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION: HOW BRICS IS SHAPING TOMORROW'S ECONOMY

In this edition, we explore how collaboration, innovation and inclusive growth are shaping the BRICS partnership - from clean energy and digital skills to regional integration. We examine South Africa's solar future through smart trade and investment, and explore how South Africa should push for an ambitious trade agreement within BRICS.

It is also with profound sadness that the SA Chapter of the BRICS Business Council shares the sad news of the passing away of our colleague, Mr Irvindra Naidoo, Chairperson of the Infrastructure Working Group. Mr. Naidoo served with unwavering dedication and outstanding leadership. His commitment, intellect, industry knowledge, and quiet strength not only advanced the work of the Council but also elevated South Africa's voice on the global stage.

- **Unlocking South Africa's Solar Future Through Smarter Trade and Investment**
- **Don't abandon BRICS, elevate its economic ambition**
- **Building BRICS' first borderless workforce**
- **South Africa's Skills Delta Hub: Turning a paradox into progress**

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UNLOCKING SOUTH AFRICA'S SOLAR FUTURE THROUGH SMARTER TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Advocate Mtho Xulu

South Africa stands at a pivotal point, with a need to maintain a reliable supply of electricity. Our solar industry has matured from being a niche solution to an essential pillar of our energy security strategy. If we are to seize the full promise of this transformation, our regulatory frameworks, trade policies, and investment strategies must evolve with equal urgency. The BRICS platform gives us a unique opportunity to harmonise efforts, deepen industrial development, and build resilience across supply chains.

By Advocate Mtho Xulu, Chair: SA BRICS Business Council Trade & Investment Working Group

SMART REGULATION FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The solar value chain cannot thrive without regulatory clarity. South African solar PV players are calling for smart regulation of critical input materials such as those used in battery storage.

This is not about bureaucracy for its own sake but about creating certainty for investors while incentivising downstream manufacturing.

Export controls for critical raw materials are often raised as a tool to protect the domestic supply. While the logic is clear, we must also acknowledge the risks.

If introduced in an uncoordinated or abrupt manner, such measures could undermine export competitiveness and raise input costs for local processors.

A phased, carefully designed approach is therefore essential. The goal is not simply to secure local resources but to build the confidence and capacity of manufacturers to compete globally.

CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION: BRICS AS A CATALYST

Globally, the economics of solar PV have shifted dramatically. Between 2010 and 2020, the installed cost of utility-scale projects fell by 81 percent, while the levelized cost of energy dropped by 85 percent.

This progress has been driven largely by East Asia, particularly China, whose scale and efficiency now anchor global supply chains.

Africa is on track to expand solar capacity nearly eightfold, from 10 GW in 2020 to 79 GW by 2040. This growth trajectory creates a natural opportunity for South Africa to leverage both our own industrial capacity and the manufacturing prowess of fellow BRICS members.

With free trade agreements opening African markets and BRICS partnerships expanding, we can position ourselves as a continental hub for clean energy solutions.

FINANCING INNOVATION FOR BROADER INCLUSION

Industrial development must be matched with innovative financing models to ensure that households and small businesses can benefit from the energy transition.

By aligning smart regulation with forward-looking trade policies, harnessing BRICS collaboration, and ensuring inclusion at every level, we can turn the promise of solar into a driver of industrialisation, regional integration, and shared prosperity.

The sun is rising on Africa's clean energy revolution. Let us ensure South Africa is not just a participant, but a leader.

Through the South African Renewable Energy Masterplan (SAREM), we are advocating for measures such as quarterly publication of procurement pipelines, consistent local content targets, reactivation of tax incentives, and the establishment of a Transformation Fund to support new entrants in the value chain.

These measures are not abstract; they are tools to democratize access. By lowering barriers to entry, we ensure that women-owned firms, small manufacturers, and township-based enterprises also have a stake in this industry.

BUILDING REGIONAL VALUE CHAINS

South Africa already boasts over 50 upstream manufacturers, nearly 750 midstream firms employing around 17,000 people, and growing downstream demand across residential, commercial, and mining sectors. This robust base positions us to extend our capabilities into BRICS markets.

The mining sector's rapid uptake of solar power, catalysed by recent regulatory changes, is a case in point. What started as a response to Eskom's load shedding has evolved into a competitive advantage.

With the right support, South African firms can export not only solar components but also expertise in design, installation, and project management.

STANDARDS AND SKILLS FOR A GLOBAL MARKET

If the South African solar industry is to compete internationally, quality must be non-negotiable. Certification of modules and production lines by accredited institutions, robust warranties, and partnerships with global OEMs are critical enablers.

At the same time, regional collaboration within BRICS countries, through shared training programmes, harmonised standards, and favourable production incentives, can accelerate cost competitiveness.

Our localisation study recommends reducing the price gap between locally manufactured and imported modules by at least 15 percent. With coordinated support, this is achievable.

Beyond price, it is skills development that will define our long-term success. Shared training initiatives with BRICS partners can create a generation of technicians, engineers, and entrepreneurs ready to power Africa's energy future.

A CALL TO ACTION

The story of solar in South Africa is about more than megawatts. It is about reimagining trade, deepening industrial development, and expanding opportunity across our economy.

By aligning smart regulation with forward-looking trade policies, harnessing BRICS collaboration, and ensuring inclusion at every level, we can turn the promise of solar into a driver of industrialisation, regional integration, and shared prosperity.

The sun is rising on Africa's clean energy revolution. Let us ensure South Africa is not just a participant, but a leader.

Advocate Mtho Xulu is the current President of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) and a national business leader, entrepreneur, and legal professional.

DON'T ABANDON BRICS, ELEVATE ITS ECONOMIC AMBITION

Wandile Sihlobo

The economists Daan Steenkamp and Jacques Quass de Vos make an important observation about the shortfalls in South Africa's geoeconomic strategy in their latest article. Amongst other things, they argue, correctly, that the BRICS grouping has provided limited economic benefit to South Africa. The exception is China, with which South Africa has deeper trade relations, although more could be done in agriculture and other sectors of our economy if we had a free trade agreement.

But the path forward in this challenge is not necessarily to abandon BRICS, but to elevate its economic ambition.

Currently, BRICS remains a loose informal grouping with no sound economic or trade approach that keeps the countries together. In fact, when one considers the intra-BRICS trade, it quickly becomes clear that very little is happening in the grouping beyond the political matters, with China again being an exception for many countries on trade matters. The constraining factor, as a result of the lack of a BRICS Free Trade Agreement, is the observation that both Steenkamp and de Vos make about the low exports and investment in this region.

Much of South Africa's economic gains and investments are with the Western world. Still, South Africa doesn't have the luxury to choose. Our approach should be to balance and retain our existing trading partners in Europe, America, and other parts of the world. At the same time, we must push for an ambitious trade agreement within BRICS and explore ways to attract investments.

Our interests should focus on bettering South Africa, skillfully navigating the complex geoeconomic environment of the day.

Q&A WITH WANDILE SIHLOBO

Q: Which agricultural commodities hold the greatest potential for expanded trade among BRICS nations, and where do you see the fastest-growing demand?

A: The key agricultural products the BRICS grouping imports are mainly soybeans, palm oil, beef, maize, berries, wheat, cotton, pork, apricots and peaches, sorghum, rice, and sugar. These are products that are produced at scale by some BRICS countries. However, imports to other BRICS members typically originate from suppliers outside the grouping.

Q: What are the biggest obstacles currently limiting agricultural trade within BRICS—such as tariffs, standards, or logistics—and how can these be addressed?

A: The higher tariffs and ambiguous and prohibitive phytosanitary regulations have proven to be a barrier to agricultural trade within the BRICS grouping. Remarkably, some BRICS countries have far more favourable trading terms with other countries outside the BRICS grouping, thus resulting in lower intra-BRICS trade.

The need to correct this misalignment in trade is even more urgent with the expanded BRICS grouping to BRICS+. The new BRICS+ members mean that the agricultural market of the grouping is even much broader and thus holds a potential economic benefit for members.

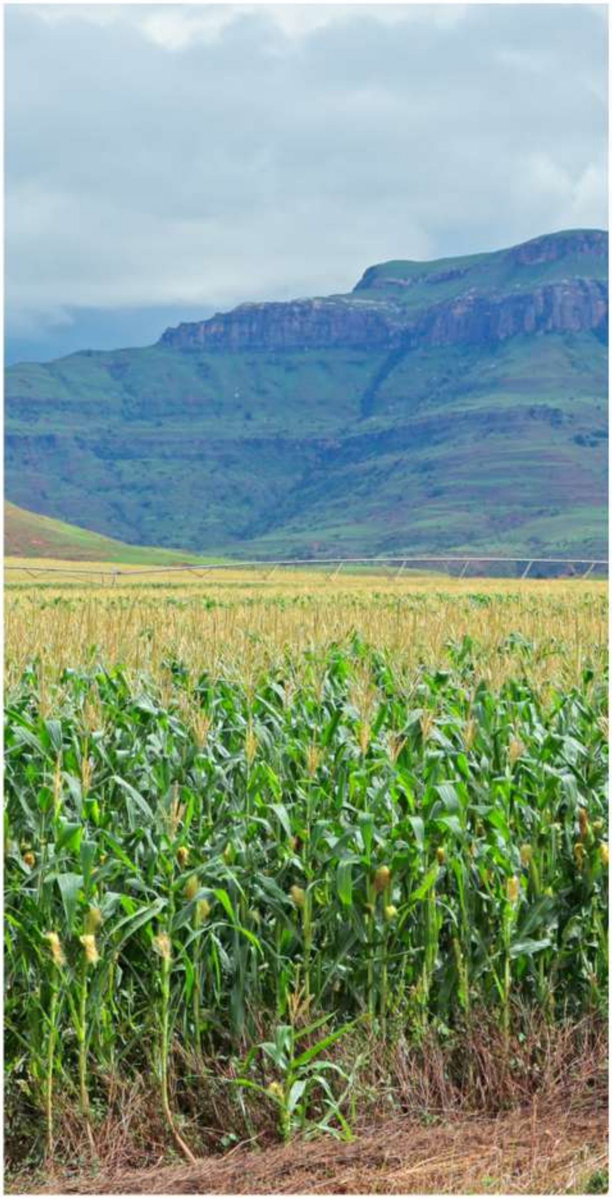
Q: How could deeper agricultural trade within BRICS contribute to global food security, especially in the context of climate change and shifting global supply chains?

A: The deeper intra-BRICS trade on agriculture, with minimal tariffs would ensure that products reach consumers at most possible affordable prices, and thus support food security. Importantly, this would, over time, also encourage an increase in agricultural production within this grouping, which ultimately contributes positively to global food security. Therefore, we must think of achieving global food security through free trade.

Q: With BRICS expanding and seeking to reduce reliance on traditional Western markets, what role do you see agriculture playing in strengthening economic resilience and political influence?

A: The increase in the intra-BRICS trade will be beneficial for the exporting economies within this grouping, and will also lessen the food trade uncertainty.

Still, we are nowhere close to such possibility. The first step is establishing a BRICS Agricultural Trade Agreement, which would mean lower tariffs, and removal of non-tariff barriers.



Q: As South Africa is the only African member of BRICS, how can the country leverage its agricultural strengths to gain greater market access and investment from fellow BRICS members?

A: South Africa has an export-oriented agricultural sector. A further opening of the BRICS countries on agricultural trade would be of benefit to the country. South Africa exports just under US$14 billion of agricultural products annually.

Our view is that as BRICS+ matures from the political front, deepening regional economic integration and trade is the most logical step towards expanding the ambition of the group, particularly in agriculture. Another vital benefit of advancing agricultural trade is ensuring food security within the BRICS+ grouping.

Q: What are the current agricultural trade statistics among BRICS countries?

A: The BRICS countries import over US$300 billion of agricultural products annually. China and India account for the lion's share of these imports.

The key agricultural products the BRICS grouping imports are soybeans, palm oil, beef, maize, berries, wheat, citrus, wine, cotton, pork, apricots and peaches, sorghum, rice, and sugar. These are products that are produced at scale by some BRICS countries. However, imports to other BRICS members typically originate from suppliers outside the grouping.

Q: What is the SA BRICS Business Council, in particular the agriculture working group, doing to bring about greater agricultural trade among BRICS countries?

A: South Africa proposes a formulation of an intergovernmental working group that explores the scope for reducing import tariffs and removing non-tariff (phytosanitary) barriers amongst the members.

This group can also develop a term of reference (ToR) that establishes the work of a negotiation platform for a BRICS PTA.

In the medium term, an exploration of a long-term and more ambitious BRICS agricultural trade agreement.

Major agricultural importers should consider encouraging their businesses to import more from BRICS members. This is vital in the current geoeconomic context.

BUILDING BRICS' FIRST BORDERLESS WORKFORCE

From skills passports to international job rotations, BRICS looks at labour mobility. Labour markets may be global, but skills recognition is not. This gap, where qualifications earned in one country are often invalid in another, constrains mobility and weakens the economic potential of a cross-border alliance like BRICS.

Ms Mapule Ncanywa

The BRICS Skills Auditorium Midterm Report captures multiple proposals aimed at breaking this deadlock. Iran suggested creating a BRICS Skills Accreditation Council (BSAC) to enable mutual recognition of qualifications in priority sectors such as artificial intelligence and green technology.

Complementing this would be a blockchain-based Digital Skills Passport, providing tamper-proof records of workers' competencies and making them portable across borders.

The UAE added a practical dimension by showcasing its cross-border job rotation and secondment programmes, already active with partners in Russia, Iran, and China. These frameworks immerse participants in different operational and cultural contexts, fostering adaptability and building professional networks. "Mobility frameworks," the report notes, "are key to building a resilient and future-ready workforce across BRICS nations."

The benefits are clear. Companies facing acute shortages, from logistics to AI, could source qualified talent quickly. Workers would gain international experience and expand their leadership capacity. BRICS as an alliance would strengthen cohesion through shared talent pipelines.

However, the report does not shy away from obstacles. Standards vary widely between education systems, raising questions about trust and equivalence. Data protection concerns loom over any blockchain-based solution. And employers remain cautious, often preferring local credentials they can verify easily.

The report points to the BRICS Standardisation Working Committee of Skills and Technology, which has already developed around 50 standards in field like AI, big data, and building information modelling.

Aligning these standards with the proposed passport and accreditation framework could lay the groundwork for genuine cross-border mobility.

For businesses, the stakes are high. Skills shortages are already constraining growth in critical sectors. A portable, verifiable system for recognising qualifications would unlock new labour flows and help companies scale more quickly across markets.

For the BRICS Business Council, the message is strategic. If BRICS wants to compete as a force in the global economy, it cannot afford to let talent remain siloed by national borders.

Mobility, backed by trust and technology, is the next frontier in workforce development.

SOUTH AFRICA'S SKILLS DELTA HUB: TURNING A PARADOX INTO PROGRESS

Closing the gap between unemployed graduates and unfilled jobs

South Africa is a country of contrasts. Official unemployment is at 32.9%. Youth unemployment is more than 60%. Yet employers in mining, green energy, and digital finance cannot find the people they need.

The BRICS Auditorium of Skills Midterm Report calls this the "South African Skills Paradox". The paradox is not just numbers on a page. It is a drag on competitiveness. It locks young people out of opportunity while slowing down industries that could drive growth. The question is: how do you connect the two?

A HUB DESIGNED FOR CONNECTION

One answer comes in the form of the Skills Delta Hub, developed with the UXI Group. Its design is straightforward but ambitious: align training directly with what employers actually need.

No more theory without practice. No more graduates mismatched to the market.

The hub has four moving parts. Teachers are trained on real industry-standard equipment. Businesses test the economics of new technologies in pilot projects.

COMPANIES CO-DESIGN CUSTOMISED COURSES FOR THEIR OWN PROCESSES AND MACHINERY

An ongoing research arm maps emerging skills against BRICS and national standards. n short, the hub doesn't just train. It adapts. It listens.

It connects classrooms to workplaces in real time.

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL STANDARDS

This approach is not operating in a silo. Partnerships with Huawei, Microsoft, and IBM are embedding advanced digital skills - AI, cloud, cybersecurity - into the hub's curriculum.

SETAs and accreditation bodies are aligning qualifications with global benchmarks like the Seoul Accord for computing.

That matters. Because in today's world, a South African graduate may work for a Johannesburg fintech or for a Singapore or São Paulo employer, entirely online.

Recognition across borders is part of competitiveness.

YOUTH AND THE URGENCY OF INCLUSION

Nowhere is the need sharper than with young people. The report is blunt: a youth unemployment rate of 62.4% is not sustainable.

Initiatives such as Youth Employment Services (YES) and incubation schemes help, but the system itself must change.

The Skills Delta Hub has potential here. By making training responsive and job-ready, it can turn unemployed graduates into productive contributors faster. This is not only a social imperative. It is an economic one.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS

For South African businesses, the hub offers a chance to shape the talent pipeline rather than suffer from its failures.

Mining companies can ensure engineers are trained on the equipment they actually use. Renewable energy firms can train technicians on the latest solar or wind technology. Banks and fintechs can close digital skills gaps without months of retraining.

For investors, the message is reassurance. South Africa is not ignoring its paradox. It is experimenting with systemic solutions. That reduces risk and strengthens the investment case.

A MODEL BEYOND BORDERS

The report suggests the Skills Delta Hub could be a blueprint for others. Russia, Brazil, and even China all face mismatches between unemployed graduates and skills shortages.

South Africa's model, if scaled, could show how to turn paradox into progress.

The paradox will not vanish overnight. But the hub is a step away from patchwork fixes and towards structural change. It links education, business, and standards into one responsive system.

And if South Africa can pull that off, it won't just solve a paradox. It will turn a weakness into a competitive edge for itself, and for BRICS as a whole.

'A SPIRIT OF SINCERITY' - INDONESIA POWERS VILLAGES WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY AND SKILLS

In the remote corners of Indonesia, where electricity remains a luxury, a transformative initiative is lighting the way.

The Green Jobs – Renewable Energy Provision programme, a collaborative effort between Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the IBEKA Foundation, is empowering young people to bring sustainable energy solutions to the nation's most underserved regions.

Launched with the mission to serve villages without reliable access to electricity, the programme focuses on training and deploying youth to frontier, outermost, underdeveloped, and disadvantaged (4T) areas. Participants are equipped with four key competencies: technical skills, perseverance, foundations for community-based development, and a spirit of sincerity.

As of 2025, the programme has engaged 261 students across 27 provinces in Indonesia, reflecting a broad geographic reach. The career pathways of graduates demonstrate the programme's wide-ranging effect: 20.7% have been absorbed into public services, 33.3% into the private sector, and 18.8% have taken up roles in NGOs.

Around 8.4% have become entrepreneurs, while 7.3% have continued their studies. This diverse distribution showcases the programme's effectiveness in preparing young professionals for impactful careers in the growing field of green jobs.

Tri Mumpuni, Executive Director of the IBEKA Foundation, provided details of the programme at the BRICS Skills Auditorium in April.

The Green Jobs programme aligns with Indonesia's broader efforts to address its vocational education and training (VET) challenges. With high high unemployment rates and only about 12% of workershaving received formal vocational training, the country faces significant hurdles. About 60% of employers report difficulty finding skilled workers, and an estimated 43% of jobs are at high risk of automation.

n response, a Presidential Regulation enacted in 2022 aims to revitalise VET across the country. Key strategies include enhancing alignment between VET programmes and industry needs, engaging the in private sector, expanding online upskilling subsidies, standardising skills certification through a National Qualifications Framework, and optimising government-run training centres.

One notable initiative is the Pre-Employment Card (Kartu Prakerja), a government-funded programme launched in 2020 to enhance digital upskilling and reskilling among job seekers and existing workers. The programme provides online training subsidies of up to Rp 3.5 million (around R3,600) per participant and is delivered in partnership with various leading online learning platforms.

Since its inception, the programme has trained over 18.9 million individuals, covering all 514 districts and cities across Indonesia.

Participation has been strongest among young adults, with 61% of trainees aged 18 to 35.

However, only about 22% of participants come from rural areas, reflecting ongoing challenges related to internet access in more remote regions.

Despite these challenges, the programme has demonstrated significant positive outcomes. According to recent data, 62% of Kartu Prakerja graduates report higher incomes, averaging a 27% increase, while 38% have started new micro and small businesses. Employment rates among participants increased notably, rising from 39% at registration to 55% just two months after completing training.

Another significant effort is the SMK Revitalisation initiative, which aims to bridge the country's skills gap by modernising vocational high schools (SMK) in line with Industry 4.0 standards. This programme has fostered robust partnerships with leading industry players such as Siemens and Festo in automation, and Telkom in the field of the Internet of Things (IoT).

By 2025, students from revitalised SMKs are expected to achieve a 94% graduate employment rate, significantly higher than the national SMK average. Graduates from revitalised schools also enjoy salaries approximately 2.1 times higher than those from non-revitalised SMKs.

Despite these promising results, progress remains limited in scale, with only about 300 out of 14,000 SMKs having reached advanced Industry 4.0 revitalisation standards.

BRAZIL ON A MISSION TO RESKILL 14 MILLION WORKERS

Brazil is confronting a monumental challenge: the need to reskill and upskill over 14 million workers by 2027 to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving labour market. This is according to Felipe Morgado, Superintendent for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education at SENAI, Brazil's National Industrial Training Service, who spoke at the BRICS Skills Auditorium in April.

He said Brazil's workforce must adapt swiftly to technological advancements and environmental shifts reshaping industries.

Sectors most affected include information and communication technology (ICT), healthcare, logistics, supply chain management, green energy, advanced manufacturing, construction, and mining.

The agricultural sector faces a shortage of 30% of technical workers, while energy technicians are in short supply in the Amazon region, with an 18% deficit.

To address these gaps, Brazil is rolling out a multi-pronged strategy. Public-private training programmes aim to accelerate skill development in priority areas, while skills-based hiring practices are increasingly replacing formal degree requirements with competency-focused evaluations.

The government is also expanding digital literacy programmes, particularly in underserved and remote regions, to ensure inclusivity, and cross-border remote work opportunities are being explored to retain skilled professionals within the country and mitigate brain drain.

The recent BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting underscored the importance of ethical integration of artificial intelligence, reskilling initiatives, and social protection policies. Ministers stressed that lifelong learning and international collaboration must become tools to ensure technological and environmental transitions benefit all workers, particularly vulnerable populations.

Brazilian businesses are investing heavily in short-term reskilling programmes, and 91% of enterprises report prioritising these initiatives. Remote work arrangements are increasingly adopted by 48% of companies in the telecommunications and technology sectors. Accelerated training models developed through public-private partnerships complement these efforts, rapidly equipping workers with the skills most needed in the evolving economy.

As part of efforts to address the skills gap, SENAI and Brasscom have signed a Cooperation Agreement to advance technical training initiatives in the ICT sector. Under the agreement, both organisations will develop sector-specific educational content and actively promote employment opportunities for SENAI graduates within Brasscom member companies.

Brazil's ICT sector continues to be one of the country's most promising industries, with the potential to create up to 147,000 formal jobs by the end of the year. However, this growth is being constrained by a persistent shortage of qualified professionals.

IRAN TRIES TO BRING AGE-OLD TRADITIONAL SKILLS INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Iran is taking steps to bridge the gap between age-old skills learned in family workshops and the demands of a modern, competitive labour market.

Abdolhossein Nazerian, International Academic Affairs Director at the Technical and Vocational University of Iran, outlined the reforms underway to integrate traditional forms of learning into the country's broader skills ecosystem.

At a meeting of the BRICS Skills Auditorium in April, Nazerian explained that Iran's skills development system rests on three distinct pillars: formal, informal, and non-formal training.

Formal training, overseen by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, covers everything from K-12 education to university-level technical and vocational programmes, with certificates that are nationally recognised.

Informal training, meanwhile, encompasses a sprawling network of over 12,000 providers offering certified TVET courses, short-term workshops, and partnerships between industry and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These are increasingly flexible and geared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing job market. Infrastructure, documentation, and clearance inefficiencies continue to hinder trade efficiency, even where formal tariffs are low.

It is the third category, however, that poses the greatest challenge - non-formal training. This is typically rooted in traditional family-based apprenticeships, where skills are passed down from one generation to the next in small workshops, often with little or no written certification. Whether in carpet weaving, ceramics, metalwork, tailoring, or other artisanal crafts, these skills have historically been recognised only within local communities.

The problem, Nazerian stressed, is that while these family-based training systems sustain cultural heritage and provide livelihoods, they lack mechanisms for portability. Workers trained this way often find their skills are not recognised when they seek employment beyond their immediate community. Without nationally or internationally accepted certification, mobility is limited and integration into broader labour markets becomes difficult. This has real consequences.

Iran's economy, like others in the BRICS+ grouping, faces urgent pressure to reskill and upskill its workforce amid the twin disruptions of digitalisation and the green transition. Without pathways to validate traditional skills, valuable knowledge risks being excluded from new industries and regional labour markets.

Nazerian proposed several multilateral solutions designed to help countries like Iran integrate non-formal skills into formal labour markets. These include establishing a BRICS Skills Accreditation Council for mutual recognition of certificates in sectors like artificial intelligence and green technology; introducing a blockchain-based Digital Skills Passport to allow workers to share credentials securely across borders; and creating a BRICS Skills Observatory to track emerging demands.

He also suggested joint apprenticeship standards in traditional sectors, which would preserve cultural practices while ensuring quality benchmarks and labour market relevance.

For Iran, success in this area would mean more than labour-market efficiency. It would allow artisans trained in centuries-old family workshops to gain formal recognition, enabling them to compete for opportunities at home and abroad. It could also help preserve traditional skills by giving younger generations a reason to continue learning them, confident that their expertise will be valued beyond the family or village setting.

A TRIBUTE TO THE FORMER CHAIRPERSON OF BBC INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP : IRVINDRA NAIDOO

It is with profound sadness that the SA Chapter of the BRICS Business Council shares the sad news of the passing away of our colleague, Mr Irvindra Naidoo, Chairperson of the Infrastructure Working Group.

Mr. Naidoo served as the Chairperson of the Infrastructure Working Group of the South African Chapter of the BRICS Business Council with unwavering dedication and outstanding leadership.

His commitment, intellect, industry knowledge and quiet strength not only advanced the work of the Council, but also elevated South Africa's voice on the global stage. In every international dialogue, his representation of our nation was marked by distinction and grace.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mr. Naidoo was a solid and profound individual—respected for his integrity, admired for his insightfulness, and cherished for the calm yet powerful presence he brought to every forum. His passing is not only a loss to the Council, but to our country, and more broadly, to the global BRICS business community as a whole.

SHARED BY THE SECRETARIAT OF THE SA CHAPTER OF THE BRICS BUSINESS COUNCIL

BRICS BUSINESS COUNCIL COLLEAGUES PAY TRIBUTE TO IRVINDRA

MEGABE SIREAT TAYE LETA ELEMA, BBC ETHIOPIA CHAIR

I am deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Mr. Irvindra Naidoo. His remarkable contributions to the BRICS Business Council and unwavering dedication to our nation are truly commendable.

Mr. Naidoo's integrity and insightfulness left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of working alongside him. His leadership and calm demeanour fostered a spirit of collaboration and respect, elevating not only our discussions but also South Africa's presence on the global stage.

Please extend my heartfelt condolences to his family and all who are mourning this profound loss. His legacy will continue to inspire us as we strive to uphold the values he embodied.

BAVLEEN KAUR, SECRETARIAT, INDIA CHAPTER
So sorry to hear. May His soul Rest in Peace

LEILA ALAGROABI, SECRETARIAT, UAE CHAPTER
So sorry to hear of Irvindra's passing - our condolences - rest in peace.

DIDIT RATAM, SECRETARIAT, INDONESIA CHAPTER
The Indonesian Chapter of the BRICS Business Council would like to extend its deepest condolences on the passing of WG Chair Irvindra Naidoo of South Africa 🙏🏻

VLADISLAV BUBNOV, SECRETARIAT, RUSSIA CHAPTER
Please accept our deepest condolences on the passing of Mr Irvindra Naidoo, Chair of the Infrastructure Working Group.

AMIR HOSSEIN MEHRAN, SECRETARIAT, IRAN CHAPTER
Our sincere condolences from all Iran delegation.

ANSHUMAN KHANNA, SECRETARIAT, INDIA CHAPTER
I am so sorry to hear about the passing away of our dear colleague Irvindra. This news has saddened all of us here in the India Chapter and particularly me, as I have some very fond memories of interacting with Irvindra over the years. I recall his pleasing demeanour – always discussing matters with such deep knowledge of subjects.

He was a gentleman – warm and friendly. We have lost a brother and I wish and pray to God to give his family the strength to see them through this difficult period. Please convey our condolences to the Naidoo family and we pray to God that may the departed soul rest in peace. Om Shanti.

NAVEEN KAPUR, SHERPA, INDIA CHAPTER
Shocking News ! Missed him at Rio and asked about him . Deepest Condolences to the family ! May his soul Rest in Peace

STEPHANIE DOMINICALLI, SECRETARIAT, BRAZIL CHAPTER
On behalf of the Brazil Chapter, please accept our deepest condolences on the passing of Irvindra.

CHARLOTTE ECKERSLEY,TRANSNET CORPORATE JHB

It is with deep sorrow and profound respect that I remember Irvin—a highly esteemed leader, a trusted colleague, and a cherished friend whom I had the privilege of knowing for over two decades.
Irvindra, affectionately known to many of us as Irvin, was more than a professional in his field. He was a beacon of integrity, wisdom, and warmth. His cheerful character and unwavering honesty made him a rare and uplifting presence in any room. Whether offering guidance or simply sharing a moment of laughter, Irvin had a way of making people feel seen, heard, and valued.

His legacy is not only reflected in the work he accomplished, but in the lives he touched—mine included. Irvin's straight-up advice was always delivered with kindness and clarity, and his leadership inspired many to strive for excellence with humility.
Irvin will be remembered for his authenticity, his generosity of spirit, and his unwavering commitment to doing what was right. His influence extended far beyond professional boundaries, leaving a lasting imprint on hearts and minds across sectors and international communities.

May his memory continue to guide us, comfort us, and remind us of the power of living with purpose and compassion.

ZODWA MBELE, DBSA
My fond memories of my Co-Chair are that he was always appreciative of the DBSA secretariat support we provided him with.

As we were preparing for hosting BRICS in 2023, he would not conclude any meeting without being appreciative of the Bank's help and by extension to Lesego and I. He was a simple, pleasant person and not sweating the small stuff.

Thank you