

BRICS: POST-XIAMEN SUMMIT

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Executive Summary

1. Leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa met in early September 2017 for the ninth Summit of the BRICS in Xiamen Fujian (People's Republic of China).
2. Since 2009, BRICs has held annual meetings. The broad range of issues in leaders' statements at the summits are reflective of BRICS' aim to offer an important space for developing world voice on key issues in global affairs. The summits have also attracted broader participation at the ministerial, subministerial, academic, business and non-governmental organisation levels.
3. Despite being such important participants in the global economy, BRICS has received consistent criticism from the West and, now increasingly even within BRICS. Most critiques focus on the lack of a shared positive identity.
4. The theme of the Xiamen Summit was "BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future". The host, Chinese President Xi Jinping, saw BRICS as an important vehicle for global development and peace.
5. The cooperation priorities of BRICS in 2017 included 1) deepening BRICS cooperation for common development; 2) enhancing global governance to jointly meet challenges; 3) carrying out people-to-people exchanges to support BRICS cooperation; and 4) making institutional improvements and build broader partnerships.
6. China had proposed a BRICS plus in March 2017. It invited five countries to the Xiamen summit (Mexico, Egypt, Guinea, Tajikistan and Thailand) which were all supposedly from different continents.
7. The BRICS summit at Xiamen appears to be China and an unequal group of others. China needs the support of other BRICS members to appear magnanimous and as

one country among others. BRICS offers a space where China can experiment and prove its egalitarian and democratic *bona fides* in international affairs.

8. The BRICS grouping continues to be one in which the non-China members can extract some status and resources from China but where China is at the centre and is uniquely poised to elevate or stall the growth of the BRICS grouping.
9. BRICS is one vehicle among many for China, but it is the most high-profile one for India, Brazil and South Africa. If the BRICS is to be plus or minus in the near future, it is largely up to China.
10. If BRICS can develop a more unified voice and the non-China BRICS can regain and maintain economic growth and improve governance, BRICS will be better equipped to respond to Western critiques and more capable of exerting a more profound and substantial influence on global affairs.