E-ISSN:2583-1747

Research Article

BRICS

Management Journal for Advanced Research

2026 Volume 6 Number 2 April

Publisher

Singh Publication

www.singhpublication.com

The BRICS Climate Dilemma: Reconciling Development, Energy Security, and Net-Zero Goals

Singh A[1*], Monica[2]

DOI:10.54741/MJAR/6.2.2026.306

[1*] Ajit Singh, Associate Professor, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[2] Monica, Assistant Professor, Constituent Government College, Meerapur Bangar, Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, India.

The BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) are highly populated, home to half of the world's population, and account for nearly 40% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, their role in global climate change is extremely important. This study investigates the sustainability strategies, policies, and governance structures used by BRICS countries to reconcile economic development with net-zero targets. Three major findings were determined during this study. First, the BRICS have created several cooperative groups i.e. New Development Bank and Energy Cooperation Roadmap 2025-2030. These groups support collaborative methods for BRICS nations to address climate change. However, these groups are not subject to compliance/regulation like other nations. Second, each BRICS country has developed an individual plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with varying timelines for their completion (ranging from 2050 to 2070) due to each country being at different developmental levels. For example, some BRICS countries are relying on fossil fuels significantly at this time. Third, a continuing barrier to implementation is the high level of financing currently available. Despite climate finance flows of only about USD 1.3 trillion (mailed drop) in total per year needed for effective and sustainable transformation, current flows of climate finance (in total) are well below this figure. This paper proposes a practical climate governance framework tailored for emerging economies like BRICS nations. It features the BRICS climate governance model, incorporating key principles of differentiated responsibility, shared financing mechanisms, and strategic leveraging of multilateral institutions.

Keywords: BRICS, climate governance, energy transition, net zero, sustainable development, climate finance

Corresponding Author

Ajit Singh, Associate Professor, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Email: atharvajit2011@gmail.com

How to Cite this Article

Singh A, Monica, The BRICS Climate Dilemma: Reconciling Development, Energy Security, and Net-Zero Goals. Manag J Adv Res. 2026;6(2):66-75. Available From https://mjar.singhpublication.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/306

To Browse

Manuscript Received	Review Round 1	Review Round 2	Review Round 3	Accepted
2026-03-14	2026-03-28			2026-04-20

Conflict of Interest	Funding	Ethical Approval	Plagiarism X-checker	Note
None	Nil	Yes	5.45	

1. Introduction

The global climate governance architecture is presently at an important point of decision-making. The split of responsibility for emission reductions from developed and developing countries is still highly debated with COP30 taking place in 2025. One of the more unexpected but important players in this debate will be BRICS, or the grouping of major emerging economies. Initially established as an investment group in 2001 and later turned into a diplomatic platform in 2009, BRICS has broadened its mandate beyond just economic cooperation to also include environmental sustainability as a key area of joint action [2]. The significance of BRICS in the context of international climate change is immense given that BRICS countries currently produce and consume approximately 50% of the world's total energy, emit about 40% of the world's total greenhouse gases and comprises approximately 1/3 of the earth's landmass [1,2]. Furthermore, when measured by purchasing power parity BRICS countries represent a larger percentage (by GDP) of world total than do the G7 countries; a benchmark that has tremendous value in international climate negotiations, where a country's GDP is both a measure of its ability to take action and an indicator of its historical liability for emissions produced.[7]

While the group's climate profile is a paradox; there are countries that have raised usage by millions through carbon-based industrial development while combining them with some of the most ambitious renewable energy targets and ongoing development of coal infrastructure, have multilateral climate principles of development while at the same time dealing with extreme domestic energy sources. In the words of an observer, "Some countries have the best practices related to renewables whereas others have the greatest availability of fossil-based fuel and the technology to capture, store and utilize carbon" [1]. The question is whether this diversity is a liability (by fracturing collective action) or a strategic asset (by providing tailored solutions for local conditions).

The paper will follow the methodology outlined below: Section Two will address the theoretical foundation for this analysis (Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) guidelines and Poly-Centric Governance Theory); Section Three will assess how states are instituting co-operative actions with regard to the environment; Section Four will provide a comparative analysis of how the BRICS member states have created their individual member state strategies; Section Five will provide a detailed analysis of the barriers to implementing the member states' strategies, concentrating primarily on the need for climate financing. Section Six will provide policy recommendations. Section Seven will provide closing remarks.

Objective of this Study

- To identify and analyze the institutional mechanisms that BRICS nations have developed to coordinate their environmental sustainability strategies at the multilateral level.
- To compare the individual transition pathways and policy approaches adopted by member states while elucidating the factors that explain their convergence and divergence.
- To assess the barriers—financial, technological, and political—that impede the implementation of BRICS climate commitments and propose potential strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- To contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of emerging economies in global climate governance and the prospects for collaborative action within the BRICS framework.

2. Theoretical Framework: ESG and Polycentric Climate Governance

To comprehend each of the countries that make up BRICS' views on environmental sustainability, we will use a theoretical framework that allows us to understand the variation in each country's national context as well as a common necessity for action as a coordinated group. For this purpose, we will use two lenses: the Environmental Social Governance (ESG) framework and polycentric governance theory.

2.1 Applying the ESG Principles to National Governance of Climate

The ESG framework presents a means of evaluating how both nations and organizations are meeting sustainability challenges considering three dimensions:

(1) environmental performance – reducing emissions, improving resource efficiency, protecting biodiversity; (2) social responsibility – principles of a just transition to a low-carbon economy, the impacts of the transition on communities and consideration of equity; and (3) governance – the extent to which policies are coherent and well-developed, the capacity of institutions, and the availability of mechanisms to ensure transparency [4].

The ESG (environmental, social, and governance) framework is important to BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries because it explicitly identifies tradeoffs. For instance, a country pursuing a heavy reduction in carbon (greenhouse gas) emissions without taking into account social impacts (for example, disruption of livelihoods for people and communities depending on coal production) will be rated poorly on the social dimension, despite improvements in environmental performance. Therefore, when it comes to climate finance allocation, governance transparency becomes increasingly important given the significant amounts of money that will be needed for these types of investments. As a result, the ESG framework captures the unjust transition principle that BRICS ministers have often highlighted, which states that "an unjust transition should not only consider the economic reality of all nations" [5].

2.2 Polycentric Governance and South-South Cooperation

Conventional understanding of climate governance has mostly used state led, top-down systems, as can be seen in binding targets set by the Kyoto Protocol as part of the climate regime. However, Bulkeley and Newell have identified a movement towards polycentric governance where multiple, interconnected centres of power are involved in governance across multiple levels (often characterized as institutional) outside of the formal treaty structures. BRICS represents this growing trend towards polycentricity; the environmental cooperation occurring among member states is accomplished through model-specific mechanisms (e.g. ministerial meetings, working groups, New Development Bank, research networks, and other informal diplomatic channels). This form of cooperative environmental governance allows for a greater level of flexibility than what can be provided through singular treaty-based governance.

The framework of South-South cooperation further expands BRICS' engagement with climate-related issues. Historically, the provision of climate financing from developed to developing countries has been framed as a means of assistance from wealthier to poorer nations, thereby placing developing nations in a position that defines their roles as those of recipients of resources rather than as active participants in the construction of climate governance. The BRICS coalition is attempting to change this frame; per UNCTAD, BRICS seeks to "re-conceptualize the role of finance to move away from being a regulatory mechanism to being a development tool" (UNCTAD, 2014, p. 9). This represents an important epistemological shift in which developing countries are now taking an active role in setting the parameters of their own involvement in climate governance rather than serving a passive role of simply accepting the terms that were set by others.

3. Institutional Architecture of BRICS Environmental Cooperation

Since establishing its commitment towards the environment in the early 2010s, BRICS created a multilayered institutional framework for sustainability cooperation. The framework operates at three levels: (1) Strategic Coordination- Leaders meet annually and issue joint declarations setting out broad priorities; (2) Operational Implementation- Working groups develop action plans to implement priority areas; (3) Financial Intermediation- The New Development Bank (NDB) intermediates financial support for sustainability initiatives.

3.1 Strategic Coordination- From Joint Declarations to Road Maps

The apex of BRICS' governance regarding the environment is the Leaders' Summit, where leaders issue joint declarations setting out broad priorities; declarations over time have expanded the climate commitments made by BRICS leaders. The "New Delhi Statement" issued at the 2021 Leaders' Summit is one such foundational document referenced by India and states, "a holistic approach to climate action by integrating adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation" [5].

However, more operationally significant than the joint declarations by leaders is the BRICS Energy Cooperation Roadmap 2025-2030, which was approved by BRICS Energy Ministers at their ministerial meeting in May 2025 under Brazil's presidency. The roadmap identified five-year priorities for cooperation related to energy; the priorities are to align regulations across all BRICS member countries, obtain low-interest financing for energy transitions and use local currencies for energy trade in order to reduce FX risk [1]. By establishing timelines and deliverables, the Energy Cooperation Roadmap 2025-2030 moves BRICS beyond aspirational declarations toward coordinated actions.

3.2 Operational Implementation: Technical Platforms and Working Groups

BRICS has established a number of dedicated technical platforms for industrial modernization issues. Created to "enhance the institutional framework for technical cooperation and develop normative guidance documents on developing new joint initiatives," the Energy Research Cooperation Platform (BRICS ERCP) is one way that BRICS has done this [1]. In the same vein, the Partnership for Urban Environmental Sustainability, the Clean Rivers Program (June 2022), and the BRICS Centre for Industrial Competence (being launched in partnership with UNIDO), also fulfil the same objective regarding addressing sectoral sustainability challenges [5,8].

In addition, BRICS's formation of working groups focusing on Smart Manufacturing and Robotics, Digital Transformation of Industry, and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), demonstrates the fact that BRICS recognizes the integration between sustainable development and industrial modernization efforts. SMEs represent "90% of companies and just over 50% of jobs in the BRICS member states," and their transition to low carbon operations will require focused policy attention [8].

3.3 The New Development Bank as Green Financial Institution

The New Development Bank (NDB), founded by the BRICS nations in 2014, has emerged as the most material institutional innovation of BRICS for financing sustainability.

Unlike many traditional development banks where Western nations have a majority vote, NDB has equitable governance shares (and voting rights) across all member countries. The NDB's objective is to act as a "green bank" and therefore focuses on financing sustainable infrastructure projects in developing countries [9].

In addition to the NDB's lending activities being significant in and of themselves, they also provide a mechanism to enable developing countries to avoid the conditionalities imposed (and typically undesirable) upon them by traditional Western development finance institutions. It has been noted that BRICS will work to "develop credit rating schemes that better reflect the unique context of [developing countries]" instead of relying on credit ratings of developed country-based rating agencies [9].

3.4 The Expansion Challenge: Institutional Coherence Amid Diversification

With Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joining in 2024 — followed by Indonesia — BRICS will face new challenges in environmental cooperation. Some new BRICS members (Iran) are among the world's largest fossil fuel producers, as evidenced by Iran's production of only 1% of its total energy from renewable sources in 2018 in contrast to a commitment to 16% by 2030 [2]. There are additional challenges from Saudi Arabia's plan for 50% compound growth in solar energy over the next five years while remaining primarily dependent on oil.

The new composition of the BRICS membership will raise questions about the capacity of the BRICS institution to achieve coherence in policy decisions through cooperation. This not only raises technical considerations but also political considerations: how can a group like BRICS which includes both the largest market for solar energy in China and the largest exporters of oil be expected to arrive at consensus on collective action on addressing climate change? Achieving a substantive answer to this question may depend upon the degree to which the institutional architecture of BRICS is able to facilitate differentiated commitments, a principle which has been promoted by BRICS in global negotiations, but must now be actualized within the internal functional structure of the BRICS association.

4. National Strategies: Divergent Pathways to Net-Zero

Table 1 summarises the major commitments by various countries within BRICS and the major challenges they are facing as a result of their specific fossil fuel endowments and the national political economy at different stages of development. Developing significant collective institutions as BRICS has done, but having such differing national political economies, has led to separate country transition pathways.

Table 1: BRICS National Climate Commitments and Energy Profiles

Country	Net-Zero Target	Key Renewable Initiatives	Primary Transition Challenge
Brazil	2050	Significant hydropower, biofuels, wind expansion	Deforestation (land-use emissions)
Russia	2060	Natural gas as transition fuel, some nuclear	Fossil fuel export dependence
India	2070	International Solar Alliance, Green Grids Initiative	Coal dependence for baseload power
China	2060	World's largest solar/wind installer	Coal remains ~55% of electricity
South Africa	2050	Renewable auctions, Just Transition Framework	Coal dependence (~85% of electricity)

Sources: Press Information Bureau, Government of India. (2025)

4.1 China: Scale Leader with Coal Dependency

China is arguably the most significant paradox for global climate governance. As the world’s largest installer of both solar and wind capacity, China is responsible for about 50% of the global deployment of both technologies in recent years. China is also the manufacturer of about 90% of all solar panels and EV batteries. At the same time, however, approximately 55% of China's electricity generation comes from coal, and the Government has recently approved the construction of new coal-fired power plants, even while expanding renewable energy sources.

This inconsistency stems in part from China’s need for a stable, reliable base load supply that is a 24/7 service provided by traditional electrical generation or coal. Currently, battery storage is not able to provide 100% of that service but will provide progressively more of it over time as renewable sources of electrical energy become more prevalent. Therefore, the pathway forward is not a simple binary move from coal to renewable energy sources, but rather a lengthy coexistence period between these two electricity generation types, with renewable energy meeting incremental, or increased, demand for electrical energy while coal continues to provide stability to the electrical system.

China’s dominance in the manufacture of green technologies positions it as a potential supplier to other BRICS members who are seeking to transition to renewable energy sources. However, questions related to technology transfer terms and local content requirements will have to be addressed within the BRICS cooperative framework.

4.2 India: Development Pressures and Ambitious Targets

India's ambition to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070—the latest commitment among BRICS countries—illustrates the country's late-phase development. It could also be argued that India has very low per capita emissions in relation to the rest of the world (approximately 1/3 of the global average), which supports India's position in climate negotiations regarding the availability of "carbon space" available for development. The emphasis in Prime Minister Modi's address at BRICS summits has been that the priorities of the G20 must include: "facilitating climate finance and technology transfer to developing nations"; and "supporting the development of the next generation of climate-resilient infrastructure." [3]

India's flagship initiative is the International Solar Alliance, which was proposed by Modi and launched at COP21. Its goal is to mobilise over USD 1 trillion for solar energy deployment by 2030. The Green Grids Initiative—"One Sun, One World, One Grid"—is an effort to establish a global interconnected solar grid that will allow for the transmission of power between regions receiving intense sunlight to regions with limited sunlight. [5] At the 11th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting in April 2025, India introduced the "Baku to Belem Roadmap," which aims to mobilize USD 1.3 trillion for achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and challenges the sufficiency of the USD 300 billion annual commitment established by developed nations for developing countries. [5]

4.3 Brazil: Renewables Rich, Land Use Challenged

Brazil has a relatively clean energy mix, with approximately 60% of the country's electricity being generated from hydropower and a significant portion of its transportation sector relying on biofuels. The primary climate issue facing Brazil is related to land-use change rather than energy-use change; the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest has shifted the country from being considered a net carbon sink (emission absorbing) to becoming a source of net carbon emissions. Therefore, Brazil's climate strategy must combine its environmental policy with its agriculture and land use governance.

With Brazil taking leadership of BRICS in 2025, it has highlighted the need for a "just and financially feasible energy transition," focusing on ensuring that the costs associated with the energy transition do not fall disproportionately on developing countries [1]. Additionally, Cop30, which will be held in Belém in November 2025, has been positioned as an opportunity to renew ambition and hold developed countries accountable for financing commitments.

4.4 Russia: The Fossil Fuel Incumbent

Russia's long-term goal is to achieve a net-zero economy by 2060, the country continues to prioritize natural gas as its "transition fuel"; this can be challenged by environmental advocacy groups, while also taking into consideration natural gas being cleaner-burning than coal. Russia has also increasingly invested in nuclear power as well as carbon capture and storage technologies.

Russia's role within BRICS is delicate. Joint statements issued by the BRICS bloc, such as the May 2025 Energy Statement, were developed with care to "respect national contexts and priorities" that allow for a variety of transition timelines [1]. The BRICS label serves as an avenue for cooperating with one another on climate issues without being pressured by the political climates in Western-dominated organizations.

4.5 South Africa: Coal Dependence and Just Transition

Among all BRICS countries, South Africa faces the greatest challenge in achieving its just transition. Currently, about 85% of electricity consumed in South Africa is generated from coal, which employs approximately 100,000 people directly and many more indirectly in other related jobs. South Africa's just transition framework is based on extensive social dialogue and includes retraining, regional economic diversification, and social protections for people who will be adversely affected by the transition to low-carbon energy sources.

South Africa's experience also provides valuable lessons for other coal-dependent regions. The just transition cannot just be viewed as a technical challenge of replacing the generation capacity, but rather it needs to consider the distributional impacts that may occur due to improper management may lead to political backlash against climate action altogether. Therefore, in the BRICS, South Africa's experience is important to the BRICS as it reinforces the BRICS principle of "just transitions" among the group.

5. Barriers to Implementation: Financing, Technology, and Political Economy

While there has been progress in both national commitments to and the establishment of institutions to enable the implementation of BRICS Environmental Sustainability Strategies, there are clear barriers to implementation. There are three types of barriers that merit attention: Financial constraints; Obstacles to transferring technology; Political economy tension.

5.1 The Climate Finance Gap

The most frequently cited barrier to climate finance is financial in nature. For example, the size of this gap is illustrated by India's request for USD 1.3 trillion per year (current average), which is 4 times greater than the USD 300 billion target set by developed countries by 2035 [5]. Current climate finance flows to developing countries for adaptation and transition are significantly below meeting the targets set forth in the Paris Climate Change Agreement [9].

In addition to sheer volume, there are also costs to obtaining climate financing. The costs of borrowing in the form of access to capital are significantly higher for companies and countries perceived to be at significant economic risk (i.e. developing countries); however, in principle, there are many viable economic investment opportunities to make

in climate-related developments and/or transition activities in the energy system. Third, there is a significant delay in the overall approval process for many current climate financing applications relative to the urgency of reducing emissions in the future.

BRICS climate finance proposed an agenda of five pillars, such as scaling up BRICS institutions' financing, increasing South-South cooperation, improving the ability to withstand systematic shocks, advocating for the reform of international financial institutions, and changing finance from being a regulatory tool to becoming a tool to promote development [9]. Implicitly, this portrays a critique of the current financial system since many forms of financing include conditionalities (policies) which do not align with a recipient country's developmental priorities.

5.2 Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property

Barrier number two relates to access to technology. Despite the BRICS countries progressing in deploying renewable energy options, some of the most essential technologies (especially as they relate to hard-to-abate areas such as steel, cement and chemicals) are still held in developed nations. While the Paris Agreement contains commitments to facilitate the transfer of technologies, the application has been limited because of the presence of commercial interests and intellectual property rights in place.

The emergence of China as a clean technology manufacturer somewhat lessens this barrier for the rest of the BRICS nations. However, there are many unknowns around technology transfer between the BRICS nations. For example, how freely will the Chinese solar panels and batteries come to BRICS countries, or will they be subject to market-based pricing that some BRICS countries cannot afford? Similarly, will the manufacturing capabilities be created across BRICS nations, or will China remain as the only country producing these technologies? There are no concrete answers to these questions yet.

5.3 Political Economy Tensions: Coal, Growth, and Energy Security

The third barrier of an energy transition is structural and, thus, a political economy that always has losers.

These losers will represent a political voice that can be used during the transition. For instance, coal dependent regions will likely face job losses; fossil fuel exporting countries will generally expect to face a loss of revenue; and industries that face carbon regulation will almost certainly incur greater competitive pressure.

BRICS joint statements repeatedly include language that addresses "energy security" and "sustainable development" while also denoting a focus on "just transitions." This triangulation of these three areas demonstrates a real tension between them, especially when countries like India determine whether they should prioritize renewables over baseload coal. With respect to South Africa, transitioning away from coal too quickly will likely result in labour unrest unless adequate social support is provided, which could undermine government stability.

The addition of major oil exporting countries to the BRICS bloc will heighten these tensions. The BRICS bloc now includes countries with wholly diverging material interests concerning the phase out of fossil fuels. To successfully implement the BRICS framework for cooperation despite differing material interests, countries must either accept a slow collective ambition for the BRICS group as a whole, or develop differentiated cooperative mechanisms that account for the variance in transition speeds as prescribed by the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" in the Global South.

6. Policy Recommendations

The analysis provided in the previous paragraphs has yielded five policy suggestions to improve environmental governance and sustainability in BRICS.

6.1 Operate with Differentiated Roadmaps

All the BRICS nations need a framework that allows for differentiated, coordinated, and specifically designed national roadmaps. Global targets will be set at the regional level (e.g., a general target for CO2 emissions reduction, and collectively committed to the addition of new renewable energy capacity), while the separate and individual member nations need to have the flexibility to create paths to meeting that target, taking into account their unique circumstances.

The Energy Cooperation Roadmap for the period from 2025-2030 provides an important starting point that can be used to develop measurable indicators that account for this heterogeneity in the BRICS response to Climate Change.

6.2 Make the NDB "Green" Capitalized

To carry out its purpose as a Green Bank, the New Development Bank must grow its lending capacity (its capital) and also increase its Green Loan portfolio. This can happen through prioritizing: 1) developing green bonds in local currencies to hedge against foreign exchange volatility associated with borrowing; 2) expediting the processing of applications for financing of renewable energy projects; and 3) providing technical assistance in implementing projects supported by it through creating lines of credit that include financing and implementation assistance. The NDB's governance model is equally owned and governed by each member nation; this provides it with international legitimacy that is lacking at other multilateral development institutions that are dominated by Western countries. The NDB should leverage this political capital.

6.3 Establish a BRICS Technology Sharing Mechanism

a BRICS Technology Sharing Mechanism in order to overcome barriers to technology transfer. The purpose of establishing such a mechanism is to allow for voluntary sharing of clean energy technologies based on the models established in the public health area (i.e., the Medicines Patent Pool) and the climate area (i.e., the technology transfer provisions of the Montreal Protocol) for the purpose of enabling affordable access to patented technologies while providing the owners (i.e., rights holders) opportunity to be compensated for their inventions; there is no better example of how a mechanism such as this can demonstrate the value of genuine South-South cooperation than China’s technological advantage.

6.4 Link Industrial and Climate Policy Explicitly

BRICS should also link Industrial Policy to Climate Policy More Directly. With the establishment of working groups for smart manufacturing, artificial intelligence, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), an opening exists to embed climate considerations into the industrial policy wine.

The 2025–2030 Action Plan for SMEs should implement specific provisions for clean technology adoption; improving the energy efficiency of existing facilities and access by SMEs to new sources of green financing. Brazil's Vice President has identified the green chemistry and bioeconomy sectors as priorities and, therefore, should move forward with the development of a bioeconomy and green chemistry through cooperative research and investment activities.

6.5 Develop Joint Positions for COP30 and Beyond

The upcoming COP30 event taking place in Belém will provide an excellent opportunity for BRICS nations to showcase a unified approach to topics such as climate finance, technology transfer, and the differing responsibilities of countries when dealing with climate change. If BRICS countries were able to coordinate their support prior to negotiations, this will change the dynamics of negotiations regarding the New Collective Quantified Goal for climate finance. Furthermore, India's new "Baku to Belem Roadmap" provides an initial framework. Therefore, it will be essential for BRICS nations to move from simply requesting funds for climate change to providing viable approaches to use those funds.

7. Conclusion

The BRICS countries occupy a questionable space within the international climate system. On one hand, they are among the largest emitters contributing significantly to the total amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. On the other hand, they also claim to be developing economies and therefore have the right to access carbon emissions as part of their ongoing development. In addition to being beneficiaries of today’s international financial system, the BRICS countries are also being drafted as architects of new institutions established to reduce reliance on the western controlled systems of the existing international financial institutions (i.e., IMF and World Bank). They are both competitors for firmer footholds in global commodity and financial markets. At the same time, they are collaborators within the context of South-South cooperation.

This study posits that the emerging BRICS climate governance model using layered institutions (e.g., strategic declarations,

technical platforms and financing mechanisms), differentiated accountability (i.e., recognising differing national paths to transition) and an explicit just transition framework, may provide a model for reconciling development and decarbonisation goals. The institutional arrangements of the BRICS, notably through the New Development Bank and the Energy Cooperation Roadmap, create pathways to operationalise their cooperation towards this end beyond using policy declarations as the vehicle for cooperation.

Despite this progress, there are serious challenges still ahead. The climate finance gap is large enough to make it almost impossible to achieve the climate targets that have been set at the international level. There are far too few technology transfer mechanisms in place than there should be in order meet the demand for them by both developed and developing countries. The expansion of BRICS, which now includes some of the world's fossil-fuel dependent countries, has raised serious questions about the internal tensions within BRICS and how those tensions may affect the ability of BRICS to act as a coherent bloc in the area of climate policy. Also, the continuing tension between the imperative for energy security (which may favour fossil fuels in certain contexts) and the imperative to decarbonise (which means phasing out fossil fuels) is an ongoing source of contention within BRICS.

Ultimately, the significance of BRICs for the broader context of global climate governance will depend on whether, as a bloc, it will be able to demonstrate that emissions reductions and economic growth can be achieved simultaneously—not merely by making incremental improvements in efficiency, but by fundamentally transforming the energy and industrial systems that drive economic growth. If BRICs can successfully demonstrate that emissions reductions and economic growth can be achieved at the same time, it will also demonstrate that the frequently asserted trade-off between climate action and development is untrue. Conversely, if BRICs fails to meet this expectation, the damage done to global emissions trajectories, and to the billions of people living in developing countries who look to BRICs as models for their own economic development, will be immense.

With COP30 rapidly approaching, as well as countries preparing themselves to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions, the BRICS experiment in collective governance of climate change merits careful scrutiny. It is not only a diplomatic formation; it also represents a serious attempt to answer one of the most pressing questions of twenty-first-century global political economy: how to raise human wellbeing while simultaneously stabilising the global systems of the planet that support all human wellbeing.

References

1. Pasupuleti M. (2024). *Just transition and affordable clean energy: Indian state ESG roadmaps with G20 and BRICS learning*. https://doi.org/10.62311/nesx/rr2d24 [Article]

2. Svetlicinii A. (2017). Global fragmentation of competition law and BRICS. *The BRICS-Lawyers' Guide to Global Cooperation*. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108236102.007 [Article]

3. Mohideen D. (2025). NITI Aayog and labour migration in India: A review. *International Journal of Social sciences and Commerce, 2*(2), 33-43. https://doi.org/10.64906/ijssc.2025.02.02.33 [Article]

4. Owojori O, & Anwana E. (2025). Climate governance in the BRICS: pathways toward net-zero emissions. *Discover Sustainability, 6*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-01181-1 [Article]

5. Press Information Bureau, Government of India. (2025). *India calls on BRICS to unite on 'Baku to Belem Roadmap'.*

6. UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2025). *Fostering BRICS leadership on climate ambition amid trade and climate tensions.*

7. Biggeri M. (2020). Small and medium enterprises and industrial clusters in BRICS countries. *Handbook of BRICS and Emerging Economies*, pp. 246-270. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198827535.003.0008 [Article]

8. Kılıç E. (2025). BRICS expansion: Economic and financial cooperation. *Sustainable Development Goals Series*, 431-477. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-6986-8_20 [Article]