

1. IBSA Dialogue Forum – I R

The Prime Minister of India, at the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Leaders' Summit, emphasized that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms are no longer a matter of choice but a global imperative. It coincided with the first G20 Summit held in Johannesburg, Africa.

1. Introduction

The IBSA Dialogue Forum was established in 2003 through the Brasilia Declaration, marking a formal framework for South-South cooperation among India, Brazil, and South Africa. It seeks to amplify the collective voice of the Global South, particularly in multilateral institutions where developing countries often remain under represented. As a trilateral initiative connecting Asia, Africa, and South America, IBSA functions as a strategic bridge facilitating political coordination, development partnerships, and global governance reforms. IBSA emphasizes multilateralism, democratic governance, equitable development, and a rules-based international order.

2. Membership and Shared Values

IBSA comprises India, Brazil, and South Africa—three large democracies from different continents united by shared developmental priorities. The grouping reinforces its commitment to -

1. Democratic institutions and constitutionalism.
2. Inclusive and human-centric development strategies.
3. Strengthening of multilateral institutions and global governance mechanisms.
4. Advancing the aspirations of developing nations, especially LDCs and SIDS.

3. Key IBSA Initiatives

IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund)

1. Operationalized in 2006 in partnership with UNDP.
2. Implements South-South development projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific.
3. Has supported 40+ projects in areas such as rural electrification, education, healthcare, women empowerment, and solar energy.
4. Demonstrates IBSA's global development footprint despite limited resources.

IBSAMAR (India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime Exercise)

1. A trilateral naval exercise to strengthen maritime security cooperation and enhance interoperability.
2. Focuses on anti-piracy, HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief), and safeguarding SLOCs in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean.

IBSA Academic Forum, Women's Forum, Editors' Forum, Business Council - Facilitate people-to-people ties and policy coordination across multiple sectors.

IBSA Summit 2025

1. Proposed Trilateral Security Architecture

India proposed the institutionalisation of NSA-level dialogue to deepen cooperation on -

1. Counterterrorism and de-radicalisation strategies.
2. Cybersecurity and protection of critical infrastructure.
3. Maritime domain awareness and protection of sea lanes.
4. Intelligence-sharing on transnational threats.

The proposal underscores the need for a stable security environment across the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic.

2. Digital Innovation and Technology Cooperation

India announced the creation of an IBSA Digital Innovation Alliance (IDIA) anchoring the vision of a human-centric digital future. Cooperation will focus on -

1. Sharing India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) frameworks - UPI, Aadhaar-stack, CoWIN, ONDC, DigiLocker.
2. Designing interoperable platforms for health, payments, and e-governance across IBSA nations.
3. Supporting women-led technology entrepreneurship and inclusive digital skilling.

4. Developing cybersecurity frameworks for data protection, digital trust, and cyber resilience. It positions IBSA as a norm-setting coalition for ethical and inclusive digital technologies.

3. IBSA Fund for Climate-Resilient Agriculture

Inspired by the success of the existing IBSA Fund, India proposed a dedicated Fund for Climate-Resilient Agriculture to –

1. Promote drought-resilient crops such as millets.
 2. Support natural farming, regenerative agriculture, and agroecology.
 3. Improve access to climate-smart technologies like micro-irrigation, soil sensors, early warning systems, and precision farming tools.
 4. Strengthen South-South exchanges on sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods.
- The fund aligns with IBSA's broader goals of food security, climate adaptation, and rural development.

4. Enhancing Cooperation in Health, Disaster Resilience, and Green Energy

The summit called for deeper cooperation in –

1. Traditional medicine, including Ayurveda and African indigenous medicine systems.
2. Health security, including vaccine platforms, genomic surveillance, and disease outbreak management.
3. Disaster resilience, leveraging satellite-based early warning systems.
4. Renewable energy, particularly solar and green hydrogen.

5. Invitation to the AI Impact Summit

India invited IBSA leaders to the AI Impact Summit 2026, to be hosted in India. This acknowledges IBSA's potential to drive global consensus on –

1. Safe, trustworthy, and human-centric AI governance;
2. Responsible innovation;
3. Guardrails on algorithmic bias, misinformation, and harmful AI applications.

UNSC and the Need for Reform

1. Historical Context – The UNSC was established in 1945 to maintain international peace and security after World War II. Its composition—P5 with veto powers + 10 non-permanent members—reflects the geopolitical environment of the 1940s. Today's world order is drastically different, yet the council's structure remains largely unchanged.

2. Why Reform Is Urgent – The UNSC is often criticised for being –

1. Unrepresentative, particularly of Africa, Latin America, and large populous nations.
2. Ineffective in addressing contemporary conflicts, humanitarian crises, and climate-related insecurities.
3. Opaque, with decision-making dominated by the P5.

Global South countries argue that a 21st-century UNSC must be more democratic, legitimate, and accountable.

4. IBSA Countries as Advocates for Reform

India highlights its global peacekeeping record, economy, population, and civilisational stature as grounds for permanent membership.

Brazil champions Latin American representation, arguing that no major region should remain excluded.

South Africa stresses the historical marginalisation of Africa and the need for at least two African permanent seats.

Roadblocks to India's Permanent UNSC Membership

1. Resistance from Some P5 Members – Certain P5 members, particularly **China**, fear losing geopolitical influence if new permanent members are added. The lack of unanimity among P5 makes structural reform extremely difficult.

2. Lack of Consensus Among Wider UN Membership – Contentious issues include –

1. Size and composition of the expanded council;
2. Whether new permanent members should have veto power;
3. Regional representation models;

4. Balance between permanent and non-permanent seats.

3. Geopolitical Competition Among Aspirants – India's aspirations are linked with the claims of G4 nations—India, Brazil, Germany, Japan—creating competitive dynamics. The “Uniting for Consensus” (Coffee Club) opposes expansion of permanent seats and supports only more non-permanent seats.

Way Forward – IBSA Strategy for UNSC Reform

1. Building Global Coalitions – IBSA intends to rally support from Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific, and Southeast Asian nations. Collective bargaining is essential to build pressure within the UN General Assembly.

2. Engaging P5 Through Sustained Diplomacy – Creative and long-term negotiation strategies will be required to gain even partial acceptance from the P5. Emphasizing that reform is in the P5's own interest to maintain UNSC legitimacy is key.

3. Leveraging Multilateral Platforms – IBSA will use platforms such as G20, BRICS, UNGA, and South–South cooperation mechanisms to sustain momentum for reform. Highlighting the risks of inaction—including UNSC's declining credibility—will remain a core strategy.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/unsc-reforms-no-longer-an-option-but-a-necessity-pm-modi-at-ibsa-meet/article70314001.ece>

