

XV BRICS SUMMIT KICKS OFF

The anticipation is over and the stage is set. The much vaunted XV Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) Summit kicks off at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg today.

The Summit is held under the theme: *“BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism”* and is expected to last until Thursday.

The Summit brings together Heads of State and Government from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa with at least 30 other Heads and of State and Government from Africa and all across the world expected to attend.

President Cyril Ramaphosa set the tone for the summit on Sunday evening, saying the BRICS grouping has the ability to “collectively shape global dynamics and acting together, have the potential to drive significant changes in the world economy and international relations”.

“This BRICS Summit is particularly important as it is being held as the world is confronted by fundamental challenges that are bound to determine the course of international events for years to come.



“Our world has become increasingly complex and fractured as it is increasingly polarised into competing camps. Multilateralism is being replaced by the actions of different power blocs, all of which we trade with, invest with, and whose technology we use.

“It is for this reason that South Africa continues to advocate for an open and rules-based global governance, trade, financial and investment system. It must be a system that does not depend on the exercise of power or unilateralism, but by the advancement of the interests of the peoples of the world,” he told the nation.

CHINA IN FAVOUR OF BRICS EXPANSION AT XV BRICS SUMMIT

The upcoming BRICS Summit will usher new steps towards expanding the membership of BRICS countries, says Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Chen Xiaodong.

Xiaodong confirmed on Friday that Chinese President Xi Jinping will be attending the upcoming 15th BRICS Summit, which will get underway next week.

The BRICS grouping of major emerging economies - Brazil, India, China, South Africa and Russia, is holding its 15th summit at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from 22-24 August 2023 under the Chairship of South Africa.

He told the media that China was actively pushing for the strengthening of partnerships with other nations. “As the world faces rising exclusiveness and protectionism, President Xi Jinping pointed out that BRICS is not an exclusive club or small circle, but a big family of good partners that is based on mutual assistance for a win-win cooperation.”

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“The leaders supported discussions on the criteria and procedure for expansion.”

The ambassador said the international community voted in strong favour of BRICS cooperation, countries that have formally applied to join the five-country bloc.

“BRICS expansion has become the top trending issue at the moment. Expansion is key to enhancing [the] BRICS mechanism’s vitality. I believe that this year’s summit will witness a new and solid step on this front,” he stressed.

Cooperation

He also touched on BRICS cooperation, which he is of the view that this year’s summit will send signals for solidarity and its commitment to make the world a better place.



“Over the past 17 years, BRICS countries have focused on shared development. BRICS continues to advance cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, energy and resources, as well as finance and monetary matters.”

In addition, they are looking to grow in other areas. These include supply chain, logistics, agriculture, food security, local settlement and cross-border payment, vaccines and public health.

“President Xi Jinping put forward four major goals of building an integrated big market, ensuring sound circulation and transport connectivity at all levels and strengthening cultural exchanges for BRICS.”

He told the media that the leaders would also draw a sharp focus on the youth and people with disabilities.

State Visit

According to a Presidency media advisory, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to host President Xi on a State Visit on Tuesday, 22 August 2023, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The ambassador said it would be his President’s fourth Official Visit to South Africa after five years.

He described the visit as significant as China and South Africa celebrate 25 years of diplomatic relations this year.

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He told the guests that both countries had built a “comrade plus brothers special bond”.

The ambassador also reflected on the partnership that the two nations enjoy.

“China-South Africa ties have set a fine example for China-Africa relations and South-South cooperation.”

Xiaodong said under Presidents Xi and Ramaphosa, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has moved to greater heights.

“On the political front, the two countries have strong mutual respect and trust. We firmly support each other on issues of our respective core interest and major concerns.”

In addition, he said on the economic and trade front, the relationship is mutually beneficial.

During the State Visit, he said both Presidents would have wide-ranging and in-depth exchanges on China-South Africa and China-Africa relations, BRICS cooperation, and international and regional issues of common interest.

They are also expected to witness the signing of bilateral cooperation documents and hold a press briefing.

The two Heads of State will also co-chair the China-Africa Leaders’ Dialogue.

“All eyes will be on how stronger BRICS cooperation, China-South Africa relations and China-Africa relations will continue to contribute to regional and global peace and development.” – *SAnews.gov.za*

ROAD CLOSURES AROUND THE VENUE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- MAUDE STREET: ONE-WAY TRAFFIC FROM 5TH STREET TO WEST STREET.
- WEST STREET: LANES CLOSEST TO THE CONVENTION CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED. THE LANES FURTHEST AWAY WILL BE OPEN FOR TRAFFIC.
- ALICE LANE: LANES CLOSEST TO THE CONVENTION CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED. THE LANES FURTHEST AWAY WILL BE OPEN FOR TRAFFIC.
- 5TH STREET: LANES CLOSEST TO THE CONVENTION CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED. THE LANES FURTHEST AWAY WILL BE OPEN FOR TRAFFIC.