

# South African BRICS Think Tank Annual Report 2014/15

*By HSRC BRICS Research Centre (BRC), 20 November 2015*

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## **2. Introduction and Background**

This report covers the activities that were undertaken by the South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT), and coordinated and managed by the HSRC BRICS Secretariat from May 2014 to June 2015, and by the HSRC BRICS Research Centre from August 2014 to 30 June 2015.

The South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT) was established through a Cabinet decision in the first quarter of 2013 and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was appointed as the incubator of the national think tank for a period of one year. This appointment was subsequently extended for the financial year 2014/15.

A Declaration on the establishment of the BRICS Think Tanks Council (BTTC) agreed upon by the five think tanks of the BRICS countries in March 2013 was subsequently adopted at the 5th BRICS Summit in March 2013 in Durban. This decision allowed the SABTT to take its place alongside the other four think tanks in a formally constituted body that aims to provide strategic inputs to the leaders of BRICS and to coordinate research within and across the five countries. In keeping with the rotational principle that Summit hosts chair all BRICS institutions Prof. Olive Shisana, HSRC CEO and SABTT head was afforded the opportunity to chair and steer the BTTC over the 2013/14 period, and the HSRC BRICS Secretariat provided the programme management capacity. The BTTC's activities for 2013/14 led to the submission of the document (see *file 14*) titled "Towards a Long Term Strategy for the BRICS" and was submitted to the BRICS Heads of State Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil July 2014. The Heads of State endorsed the Long Term Strategy and commissioned the BTTC to undertake an in-depth analysis of the five pillars on which the strategy was based, and further propose recommendations and pathways for the implementation of the recommendations. In 2014/15 the in-depth analysis was undertaken and will culminate in the soon to be released document entitled "The BRICS Long Term Strategy." The rest of the report is divided into the following sections:

- Duties of the SA BRICS Think Tank
- SABTT Processes
- SABTT Activities for 2013/14 to 2014/15
- SABTT Website
- Recommendations for future BRC/ SABTT collaboration
- Lessons learnt

Supporting documentation is included in the electronic document pack which accompanies this report.

## **3. Duties of the HSRC BRICS Research Centre on Behalf of the SA BRICS Think Tank (SABTT)**

The scope of activities that the HSRC BRICS Research Centre programme management team was requested to undertake on behalf of the SABTT includes the following highlighted in the Memorandum of

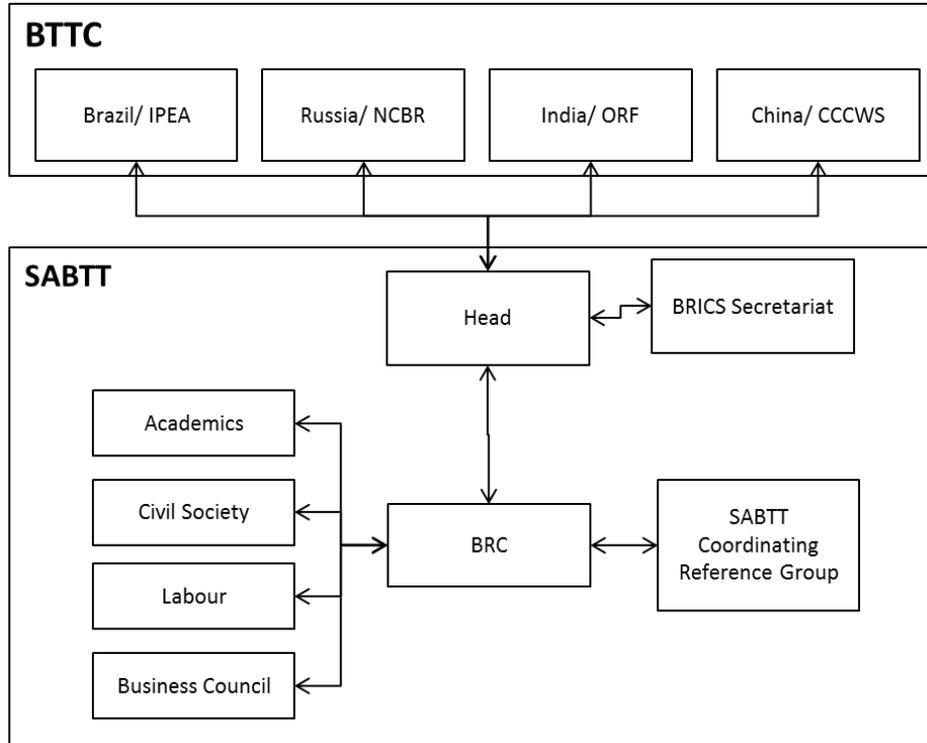
Understanding (MoU) between the HSRC and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and through related additional requests from the DHET, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the HSRC's BRICS Secretariat.

- Establish five expert working groups to prepare analyses and review the work of the BTTC members contributions
- Conduct an in-depth analysis of long-term strategy pillars, propose recommendations, implementation pathways, and identify development indicators for the pillar on “Social Justice, sustainable development, and quality of life”;
- Promote and communicate the work of the BRICS, the BTTC, and the SABTT in particular, by setting up and maintaining a SABTT website, and through media releases and HSRC publications.
- Research was to be carried out in a professional and ethical manner;
- Preparation for and participation in BTTC and Academic Forum meetings;
- Organising stakeholder workshops in preparation for the 2015 Academic Forum to be hosted by Russia;
- Ensuring South Africa's participation at both the BRICS Think Tank Council (BTTC) and Academic Forum in 2015;
- Coordinate and organize three civil society workshops on South Africa's future BRICS strategy on behalf of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation;
- Provide support to the Russian National BRICS Research Committee for the coordination and organization of the South African delegation participation in the BTTC, BRICS Academic Forum and BRICS Civic Forum 2015 meetings in Moscow, Russia;
- Organising travel, subsistence and accommodation for South African delegation to both the BTTC and Academic Forum respectively;
- Ensure that the accounts for the SABTT project are kept in order and made available to Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for inspection at any stage during the duration of the HSRC's incubation of the SABTT;
- Submit quarterly reports to DHET regarding the progression of the project;
- Ensure security of all SABTT embargoed information.

Further information regarding the SABTT's duties can be found in file *11.1. DHET-HSRC BRICS Draft Agreement, 2014.doc*

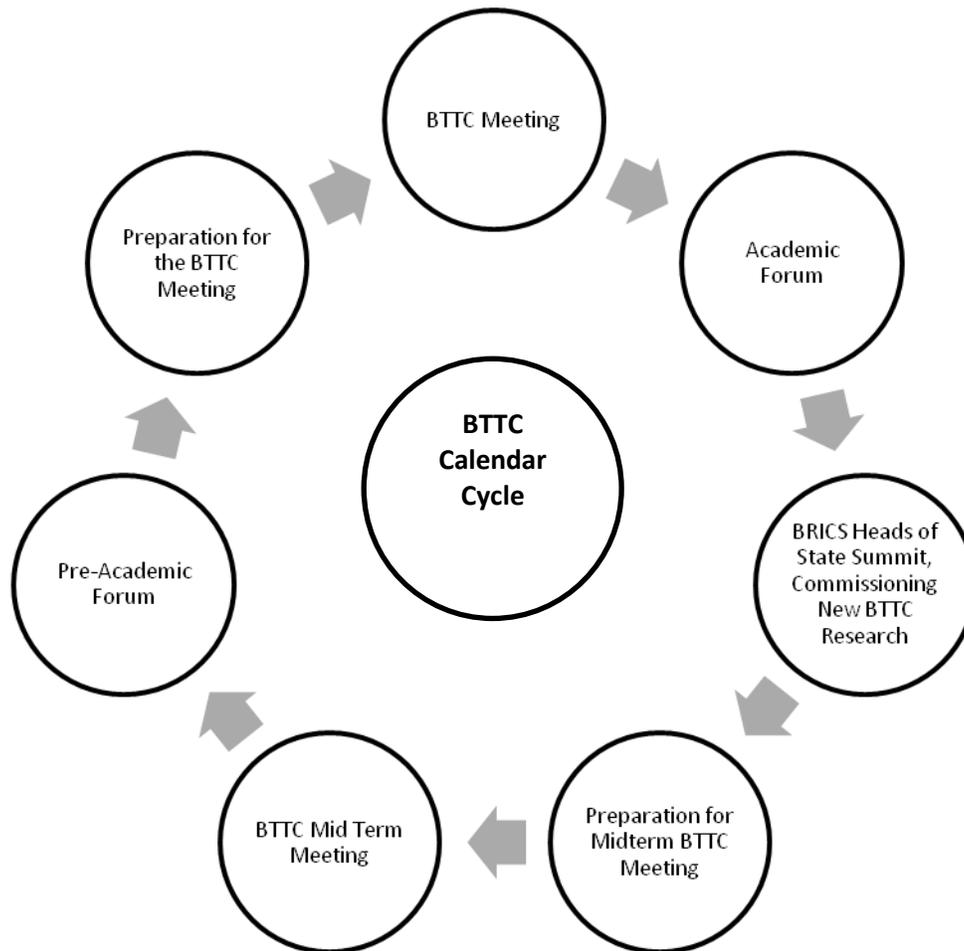
## 4. SABTT Processes

### 4.1. HSRC BRICS Secretariat & BRICS Research Centre (BRC) Programme Management & Coordination Process Flow for SABTT Activities



The above process flow details the relationships between the SABTT and the BTTC as well as the internal coordination dynamics within the SABTT. The Head of the SABTT liaises with the other 4 BTTC members and communicates the latest developments internally amongst the BRICS Secretariat (comprised of Research units from within the HSRC including the BRC). The BRC in turn liaises with the SABTT Coordinating Reference Group made up of representatives from the DHET and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) for coordinating the various BRICS related events. Following the discussions with the reference group, the BRC engages with Academics, Civil Society organisations, Labour movements and the BRICS Business Council and organizes the particular programmed event. The BRC acts in a project management capacity to ensure the successful completion of these events. This includes financial and logistical management support, in addition to providing the SABTT the research foundation necessary to engage on BRICS matters from an informed perspective.

## 4.2. The BTTC Calendar Cycle



### 4.2.1. BTTC Meeting

The BTTC Meeting usually takes place in March/April of each year, whilst 2015 was an exception as the meeting was delayed till May. The main purpose of the meeting is to resolve various operational issues related to the key functions of the BTTC as defined in the BTTC Terms of Reference (See file 10.15). The meeting aims to conclude the state of the current core piece of work that the BTTC undertook in the year prior to the engagement. The related document is submitted to the identified Government Sherpas who pilot the BTTC and Academic Forum proposals and recommendations to the BRICS Heads of State summit. The BTTC meeting is attended by two official delegates, whilst other members attend as observers from the respective think tanks and relevant government departments respectively. The Heads of State Summit deliberates on the proposals and recommendations of the BTTC and Academic Forum may choose to endorse the recommendations and commission further research if necessary.

### 4.2.2. Academic Forum

Each year, the convening head of the BTTC, hosts an Academic Forum, to which the premier academics of each country are invited to present papers on key themes identified by the BTTC. The Academic

Forum is generally held immediately after the BTTC Meeting. In 2014/15, ten academics from each country were invited to Moscow, Russia to present papers. These papers are in turn consolidated and published each year. See folder 1 in the document pack, for further information pertaining to Academic Forums 5, 6 and 7.

#### **4.2.3. BRICS Heads of State Summit, Commissioning of new BTTC Research**

Each year following the submission of recommendations from the BTTC meeting to the Heads of State Summit, the summit concludes with the release of Heads of State Declaration that highlights the recommendations of the BTTC that have been adopted. The Heads of State furthermore, commissions future work to be undertaken by BTTC for the forthcoming year. The declarations from the previous Heads of State Summits can be found in Folder 3 of the document pack.

#### **4.2.4. Preparation for Midterm BTTC Meeting**

Once future research focus areas for the BTTC have been identified, each member state's think tank embarks on producing research that informs their particular position and future recommendation on the matter. This involves identifying working groups comprised of leading academics in a the particular field of research. Each member state takes the lead on a particular set of research topics. The primary working group identified would be tasked with taking forward the research activities for the country's main focus area. The first draft of the research output from this process is presented at a public forum to solicit feedback from civil society organisations and peers familiar with the particular research theme. This feedback is thereafter used to further refine the working group contribution.

#### **4.2.5. BTTC Midterm Meeting**

The contributions prepared by the BTTC Working Groups are consolidated and submitted to the BTTC Midterm Meeting. This also includes the critiques prepared by the countries not primarily responsible for each focus area. Each of these contributions is debated by the official delegates representing the BTTC members. The goal of these discussions is to identify common ground on each research theme that is acceptable for the BTTC members.

#### **4.2.6. Pre-Academic Forum**

In South Africa in preparation for the main Academic forum, a 'mini' academic forum is hosted locally. This forum is held to provide the selected academics with an opportunity to present their Academic Forum draft papers to invited peers and discussants for feedback and critiques. The feedback received is thereafter used to shape the final versions of their papers for presentation at the Academic Forum.

#### **4.2.7. Preparation for the BTTC Meeting**

As we move towards the BTTC Meeting, each BTTC member reviews the latest draft of the consolidated document developed from inputs of all BTTC country working group. During this process, the BTTC members consider whether the latest revisions to the document adequately represent the spirit of the discussion and agreements reached at the BTTC meeting. Where there are concerns, these issues are raised prior to the BTTC meeting and these items are placed as an agenda item for discussion at the

BTTC meeting. In South Africa prior to the BTTC meeting, the final draft of the working group documents are also submitted to the DHET and DIRCO for review.

## **5. SABTT Activities & Highlights from 2014/15**

### **5.1. BRICS Think Tank Council Activities**

#### **5.1.1. BRICS Think Tank Council Deliverable 2014/15 - Towards a Long-Term Strategy for the BRICS: Recommendations by the BRICS Think-Tank Council**

At the March 17th, 2014 meeting of the BTTC in Rio de Janeiro, member's organizations were given the mandate to produce a substantive analysis of the five pillars recommended in the BTTC 'Towards a Long Term Strategy for the BRICS' that was subsequently endorsed by the Heads of State in Fortaleza. Each BTTC member was tasked with conducting a systematic analysis of the five identified pillars. The working group members from each BRICS country undertook to outline the challenges faced by each country; identify current programmes established to address the issue; analyze and examine how challenges may be addressed as part of a BRICS strategy for achieving the identified aim. In so doing, the members of the working group attempted to answer a set of questions on how each country and the BRICS as a whole may achieve its strategic objectives.

Each country headed a particular pillar, and to ensure representation, each country also appointed focal point persons to oversee and comment on each of the other countries working groups. In South Africa the HSRC BRICS Research Centre Head, Dr. Jaya Josie, was charged with coordinating the South African working group activities. The working groups were:

##### ***5.1.1.1. Group one: Pillar - Promoting Cooperation for Economic Growth and Development led by China under the coordination of Yang Lei.***

The main features of the BRICS economic growth and development pillar included: the potentiality for BRICS further cooperation in economic growth and development; key measures in economic cooperation for BRICS; mechanisms and roadmap to further economic cooperation, and BRICS cooperation in international governance

The South Africa workinggroup tasked with reviewing pillar one consisted of Dr. Jaya Josie (HSRC) as focal point, and academic forum members David Fryer (Rhodes University), Nikki Cattaneo (Rhodes University), Mohamed Seeraj (Wits University) and Peter Jacobs (HSRC).

##### ***5.1.1.2. Group two: Pillar - Peace and Security led by Russia under the coordination of Georgy Toloraya and Victoria Panova from the BRICS National Research Committee, Russia.***

The pillar covers the following areas: Rule of law and polycentric world (BRICS role in resolution of issues pertaining to peace and security); UN role and prospects and main challenges to peace and security.

In South Africa the working group was made up of Prof Narnia Böhler-Muller (HSRC) as the focal point, and external contributions from academic Dr. Candice Moore (ACCORD, UKZN) and various experts within DIRCO.

**5.1.1.3. Group three: Pillar - Social Justice, Sustainable Development and Quality of life, led by South Africa under the coordination of Olive Shisana**

The working group was led by SABTT with Prof. Olive Shisana (HSRC) as the focal point, and seconded by Prof Narnia Böhler- Muller (HSRC).

In keeping with the BTTC proposal “Towards a long-term strategy for BRICS” adopted at the BTTC Meeting in Rio de Janeiro in March 2014, the focus of the BRICS strategy for Social Justice, Sustainable Development & Quality of Life is to address the four main challenges of extreme poverty, inequality, unemployment, and an improved quality of life.

The final baseline document was structured as follows:

As per the “Proposed Initial Guidelines for the BTTC Working Groups” (see *file 5.4*), the final Pillar Three document was structured as follows;

- 1 – Introduction
- 2 – Present situation in each BRICS country
- 3 – Main challenges
- 4 – Successful international experiences of cooperation and sharing
- 5 – Proposals of specific actions to be undertaken with regard to promoting cooperation and sharing

The document covers the following issues, social protection and social security; labor and social assistance; health, education, housing, water and sanitation; climate change and ecological degradation, and food security. The impact of gender and migration was a common theme in each of these sections.

**Participants and contributions:**

The following academics for the working group were selected on the basis of their expertise in various areas:

- Jackie Dugard (Housing, Water and Sanitation) from University of Witwatersrand,
- Michelle Pressend (independent consultant, Climate change, environmental degradation and food security) and
- Dennis George (FEDUSA, Labor).
- Various HSRC units also contributed inputs on specialist areas where expertise could not be sourced externally.

**5.1.1.4. Group four: Pillar - Political and economic governance, led by India under the coordination of Samir Saran of the Observer Research Foundation, and seconded by Vivian Sharan.**

The pillar covered the following areas: Economic cooperation for global stability, reform of IMF and the World Bank, the role of a BRICS Development Bank, political leadership in international institutions.

The focal point for South Africa was Dr. Temba Masilela (HSRC) and seconded by Prof. Daniel Plaatjies (HSRC) with external academic contributions from Siphamandla Zondi (Institute for Global Dialogue) and Dr. Alan Hirsh, (UCT).

**5.1.1.5. Group five: Progress through knowledge and innovation sharing led by Brazil under the coordination of Luis Kubota from IPEA.**

The pillar covered the following areas: The main features of the BRICS national system of innovation; building knowledge for innovation; strategies and mechanisms to finance innovation; regulatory framework to promote innovation, and international cooperation on knowledge building and innovation sharing.

Dr Glenda Kruss (HSRC) was the focal point for South Africa with external academic contributions from David Kaplan (UCT) Gillian Marcel (University of the Witwatersrand) Johan Mouton (University of Stellenbosch) Mammo Muchie and Rasigan Maharajh (Tshwane University of Technology).

The Final document (*Towards a Long-Term Strategy for the BRICS: Recommendations by the BRICS Think-Tank Council*) is currently under embargo and review by the relevant respective government departments and will be released after consideration by the next BRICS Heads of State Summit in Russia in July 2015 (*see file 5.1.1*).

**5.1.2. BTTC mid-term meeting, Beijing, 21-22 November 2014**

The midterm BTTC meeting which was held in Beijing was attended by Prof. Olive Shisana and Prof. Narnia Bohler Muller. The meeting was held to review the progress on the document titled 'Towards a Long-Term Strategy for the BRICS: Recommendations by the BRICS Think-Tank Council'. A draft of the document was presented and circulated for finalization and to be presented to the May 2015 BTTC Meeting in Moscow for approval and submission to the BRICS Heads of State through the Sherpas of each BRICS member state. (*see file 5.3*)

**5.1.3. The Annual BTTC Meeting, Moscow, 21 May 2015**

The Annual BTTC meeting was held on 21 May 2015 and was attended by Prof. Narnia Bohler Muller (HSRC) and Prof. Ari Sitas (apology for late arrival) as official delegates, and Prof. Olive Shisana (HSRC CEO) as head of the SABTT delegation. Dr. Sarah Mosoetsa (NIHSS) and Dr Jaya Josie (HSRC, BRC) attended as observers. In addition Dr. Diane Parker, Mr Simon Motlhanke, and Mr. Brian Ritter from the departments of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) respectively, also attended as government observers.

The meeting approved the long term strategy document for submission to the forthcoming Heads of State Summit in Russia. Secondly, the meeting considered the proposal submitted by the Russian National Committee for BRICS research entitled *BRICS Goals for a Better Future* (see file 5.2). This proposal set out key goals that BRICS are to achieve by 2025. All BTTC members have been given the opportunity to review and comment on the document.

## **5.2. Academic Forum Activities**

### **5.2.1. Pre-academic forum workshop, Pretoria, 15 April 2015**

To ensure that the selected academics had sufficient inputs and direction in preparation of their papers for the forum in Moscow, a ‘Mini-Academic Forum’ workshop was held in Pretoria on 15 April 2015. Each of the presenters was invited to present draft forms of their contributions to an audience of discussants and academic peers. All the presenters found the reviews and comments by the respondents and peers useful in refining their papers ahead of the VII Academic Forum. Also participants offered each other additional assistance and information where necessary. Academics and discussants from outside of Gauteng were provided with travel and accommodation support by the SABTT to ensure their participation at this event. (see file 1.4 for the full programme )

### **5.2.2. VII BRICS Academic Forum, Moscow, June 2015**

On behalf of the SABTT the BRC, in conjunction with the DHET, was requested to manage the preparation, coordination and provide logistical support for the South African participation in the VII BRICS Academic Forum held in Moscow from the 22 to 24 May 2015. These arrangements included identifying the list of potential South African paper presenters following the criteria and past practices of the SABTT. The criteria included ensuring compliance with the forum’s themes, representation of previously disadvantaged communities, and regional, demographic and gender representation.

The VII BRICS Academic Forum was held from 22 to 24 May 2015 in Moscow, Russia. The Forum, organized by the Russian National Committee on BRICS Research, was themed “BRICS cooperation for growth, security and prosperity”. Each country chaired two sessions, and there were five presentations from each country in every session. From South Africa Prof. Olive Shisana chaired the session under the theme “Addressing Social Problems – Possible Issues For BRICS Cooperation. Policies on the Labour Market, Migration, Healthcare, Social Safety Nets”, and Dr Diane Parker chaired the session under the theme “Higher Education: - The driver of collaboration in the BRICS Knowledge Society”. Although some papers were co-authored only the principal author presented the paper. Below are the titles of papers presented by South African academics.

- ***Prof Ari Sitas, University of Cape Town and the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS)***, presented a paper entitled, “Social Problems and challenges in the BRICS Domain” under the theme “Addressing Social Problems – Possible Issues For BRICS Cooperation. Policies On The Labour Market, Migration, Healthcare, Social Safety Nets.”.
- ***Dr. Buntu Siwisa, associate of DIRCO and independent consultant***, presented a paper entitled, “BRICS at Seven: finding and funding the nexus between peace, security and development in Africa” under the theme “Peace and Security: Responsibility for BRICS for Global Stability, New Threats and Challenges and Opportunities for BRICS.”

- *Ms. Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, South African Institute of International Affairs* presented a paper entitled, “Democratising the BRICS Image through Inclusive Global Agendas” under the theme “BRICS and Outside World: Perception and Opportunities for Managing BRICS Image: BRICS Academic Community In Search of Identity, Independent Agenda and Outreach.”
- *Dr. Jaya Josie, HSRC BRICS Research Centre*, presented a paper entitled, “Sustainable Development Perspectives of Inclusive Housing Policy in BRICS: A Review of South African Policy in the context of BRICS” under the theme “Sustainable Inclusive Development.”
- *Prof. Narnia Bohler-Muller, HSRC, Democracy, Governance & Service Delivery Unit*, presented a paper entitled, “BRICS and the International Rule of Law” under the theme “Building A Fair World Order: Rule of Law, Role of International Institutions”.
- *Prof. Nico Jooste, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University* presented a paper entitled, “Higher Education: - The driver of collaboration in the BRICS Knowledge Society” under the theme “Culture, Science and Education as Drivers for Enhanced Cooperation Within BRICS; Inter-civilizational Exchanges and Dialogue”.
- *Dr. Nicolette Cattaneo, Rhodes University* presented a paper entitled, “Trade policy, the WTO and productive transformation strategies in a context of regional and bilateral trade agreements: perspectives from South Africa” under the theme “Trade: Integrity of the rules-based trade regime: central role of the WTO, possible creation of a BRICS-wide market, cooperation within the WTO, G20 and regional economic organizations”.
- *Prof. Olive Shisana, Human Science Research Council* presented a paper entitled, “The Evolution of the BRICS, Perspectives for Enlargement” under the theme “BRICS Evolution Vision: Institutionalization, Enlargement and Outreach technologies”.
- *Dr. Rasigan Maharajh, Tshwane University of Technology* presented a paper entitled, “Digital Liberty, the Knowledge Commons and some Challenges for the Governance of Information and Communication Technologies and the Internet for BRICS” under the theme “ICT And Internet Governance On The BRICS Agenda”.
- *Prof Ronney Ncwadi, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University* presented a paper entitled, “BRICS Bank as an alternative to the current international financial system in developing countries” under the theme “Reform of the International Financial System and the Future of the BRICS Born Institutions”..
- *Dr. Seeraj Mohamed, University of the Western Cape* presented a paper entitled, “New drivers of BRICS economic cooperation: Corporate restructuring and value chains” under the theme “New Drivers Of BRICS Economic Cooperation: Strategy of Economic Partnership, Roadmap Of Investment Cooperation, Opening Up New Tracks Of Cooperation In Mining, Energy, Industry, Agriculture, Innovation etc”.

### **5.3. Other SABTT Related Activities**

#### **5.3.1. HSRC BRICS Seminar Series 2013 to 2015**

One of the activities undertaken by the HSRC BRICS Secretariat to stimulate interest in BRICS and to involve BRICS stakeholders from other institutions and the public at large in SABTT initiatives, was to launch a seminar series on BRICS. The seminars that were held are as follows:

- 19 June 2014 *The elephant in the room? Peace and Security in the BRICS partnership: towards the 6th BRICS Summit* Speaker: Dr Candice Moore, Senior Researcher, ACCORD and Research Associate, University of Johannesburg.
- 29 July 2014, *Reporting on the Sixth BRICS Summit*. Speaker: Dr Olive Shisana, CEO, HSRC
- 21 August, *BRICS: Inequality and development challenges* Speaker: Dr Kraemer-Mbula, senior lecturer and research fellow, Institute for Economic Research, Tshwane University of Technology
- 14 October 2014. *The emergence of BRICs: A new phenomenon in the global innovation system?* Presenter: Professor Mario Scerri, Institute for Economic Research on Innovation (IERI) and the Centre of Excellence in Scientometrics and STI Policy, Tshwane University of Technology
- 24 October 2014. *Are BRICS countries winning the war on HIV/AIDS? Analysis of responses*. Speaker: Prof Geoffrey Setswe, Prof Olive Shisana, Dr Mpumi Zungu, Human Sciences Research Council
- 27 January 2015. *Educational engagement: China, Africa and South Africa*. Dr Ke Yu, Democracy Governance and Service Delivery, Human Sciences Research Council.
- 7 April 2015. *Time to end extreme inequality. A Perspective from the BRICS Presenters*. Mr Poooven Moodley, Associate Country Director for Oxfam in South Africa.
- 11 June 2015. *BRICS Perspective for Reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO) – Reflections of a Negotiator*. Ambassador Faizel Ismail, former South African Ambassador to the World Trade Organisation.

See file 10.16 and folder 7 for the presentations / papers presented in the seminar series.

### 5.3.2. BRICS publications

Major publications during 2014/15 included “Papers for the Fifth BRICS Academic Forum. BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation” June 2014 edited by Dr Narnia Böhler-Muller. This book was published by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation with the assistance of the Department of Higher Education and Training. “A Successful Start: The SA BRICS Think Tank” HSRC Review, Volume 12 Number 2 April/May 2014 by Prof Olive Shisana (see file 6.1).

An additional major publication from the SABTT were chapters in the official VI BRICS Academic Forum publication of the reviewed conference papers edited by Renato Baumann das Neves and Tamara Gregol des Farias, and produced by IPEA, the Brazilian Think Tank Council. The publication is a book of the papers that were presented at the 2014 Rio de Janeiro VI BRICS Academic Forum (see file 1.8.1.).

### 5.3.3. Presentations by SABTT members and associates in 2013 to 2015

Four international conference presentations were made by SABTT members in the course of 2013/14.

- Prof. Olive Shisana presented a paper (by invitation) on “BRICS think tanks in a changing world” at a conference in Beijing in June 2013.
- Dr. Jaya Josie addressed BRICS counterparts (by invitation) on “The BRICS Development Bank and public infrastructure investment” at a conference in Russia in October 2013.

- Dr. Ke Yu presented a paper on “Education cooperation or aid: China, Africa and South Africa” at a conference on “China-South Africa diplomatic relations at 15 years” in Pretoria in September 2013.
- Dr. Jaya Josie presented a paper, by invitation, in a session on “Regional integration for sustainable infrastructure development” at an Economic Policy Forum workshop in Brazil in March 2014.
- Dr. Priscilla Reddy (HSRC) attended the BRICS Health ministers meeting in Brazil,
- Dr. Seeraj Mohamed (UWC) and Prof. Daniel Plaatjies (HSRC) attended a BRICS meeting in Beijing on the sidelines of the BTTC midterm meeting in November 2014.

#### **5.3.4. SABTT/Statistics South Africa Social Indicators February 2015**

In working towards an agreeable set of Indicators in the areas of Education and Health, the SABTT held a preliminary workshop in Cape Town in February 2015, to discuss the Social Indicators currently used. Various Statistics South Africa representatives as well as Academics in the Cape Town area, in addition to HSRC data specialists attended the workshop. Further information pertaining to this event can be found in folder 13.

#### **5.3.5. Consultative Workshops with Civil Society on BRICS, facilitated by SABTT/DIRCO**

The BRC on behalf of the SABTT organized a series of consultative workshops with South African Civil Society organizations. The purpose of these workshops was to review the BRICS Long Term Strategy and the SABTT’s working group input into the BTTC in depth analysis of the Five Pillars, as well as South Africa’s overarching strategic goals for BRICS participation since 2011. Three successive workshops were held in Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban, in order to solicit the views of civil society, academics, labour and business. The workshop programme included the key note interventions from Prof. Olive Shisana, the Chair of the SABTT, as well as a contribution from Ambassador Anil Sooklal from DIRCO. Following the presentations civil society participants were provided an opportunity to debate the BRICS long term strategy and make recommendations on how to take SA’s BRICS agenda forward (*see folder 4* for minutes on each of these sessions as well as the presentation that was made by Prof Shisana).

## **6. SABTT Website**

### **6.1. About the Website**

The South Africa BRICS Think Tank Website was launched in November 2014 as a platform for the SABTT to share information with national and international stakeholders on BRICS and BRICS related issues. Since its launch, the website has garnered over 2000 page views. The website provides various pieces of relevant BRICS information such as details pertaining to the SABTT, the BTTC and the several reports, publications and papers produced by the SABTT. In addition, the website provides an automated news feed populated by numerous sources of BRICS information and a customized search feature that allows the SABTT website to act as a gateway tool to access content from other stakeholders.

## **6.2. Development of the SABTT Website**

The South African BRICS Think Tank Website, [www.sabrics-thinktank.org.za](http://www.sabrics-thinktank.org.za), was developed by Digital Interactive (DI) in collaboration with the HSRC BRICS Research Centre (BRC). Each page on the website can be updated in a manner similar to a blog posting.

The cost of developing the website amounted to R89,584.62. These costs are attributed to Setup and Design requirements, Development activities as per the User Requirements Specification, Documentation and Management requirements and the physical hosting of the site for twelve months. The detailed breakdown of these costs can be found in *file12.5. SABTT Website Development Specification and Quote.pdf*.

## **6.3. Features of the SABTT Website**

The SABTT Website provides the following functionality:

### **6.3.1. Registration and Subscription**

Visitors to the website are encouraged to register on the site. This allows us to email the subscribers the latest content that we upload to the website as news.

### **6.3.2. Events Calendar**

An events calendar is provided to users to easily keep track of the upcoming and scheduled BRICS events occurring locally and internationally.

### **6.3.3. Site Map**

A site map is provided to allow the users to view the site in the form of a tree menu.

### **6.3.4. Home Page**

The Home Page provides several facilities. Most noticeable is the revolving picture carousel where pictures from the latest BRICS events may be viewed.

In addition, we also provide a very useful tool in the form of a Customised Google Search facility. The site provides immediate access to via direct searching of every site listed under 'Useful links' on the website.

Below the search function, we provide an abbreviated BRICS News Feed. BRICS news items are sourced from Google News and BING News are provided directly on the home page.

Social Media windows are also available on the home page in the form of a Twitter and Facebook box. #BRICS is the search criteria used to identify BRICS related information on Twitter, and the HSRC Facebook page is viewed on the homepage.

Additional multimedia feeds are available on the home page in the form of videos and pictures that can be browsed by our users.

### **6.3.5. Detailed BRICS news feed**

A detailed news feed page is provided on the site. The news components are structured in the below mentioned manner. We must note that the news sources that are provided via this tool are selected based on what is currently available. Other preferred news sources may not disseminate their news via an RSS feed and therefore cannot be included in this tool.

*Please visit [www.sabrics-thinktank.org.za](http://www.sabrics-thinktank.org.za) for a detailed view of the website and the implications for its future maintenance.*

## **7. Lessons Learnt in Managing the SABTT Activities**

Over the past two and half years the HSRC BRICS Secretariat and the HSRC BRICS Research Centre (BRC) have managed to successfully support and coordinate all SABTT programmes. The undertaking was a new initiative and experience for the HSRC in particular and other BRICS think tanks in general. During the period several lessons have emerged that may be useful for the future programme management of the SABTT. Some of the most significant lessons are highlighted below.

### **7.1. BTTC Engagements & Negotiations**

BTTC members are made up of officially designated think tanks from BRICS member countries. The appointment of an institution to officially represent a member state on the BTTC is made by the competent government ministry/department of a member state. In the case of China the think tank is an instrument of the ruling party. In the case of Russia the think tank is affiliated to government supported academic institutions. The role of the BTTC in the BRICS is to provide consolidated policy recommendations based on consensus to BRICS governments and heads of state. The most recent experience of the SABTT in its role as head of the BTTC indicates that finding consensus and common ground for policy recommendations among a disparate group of think tanks can be an extremely difficult hurdle to overcome. The HSRC found that experience, diplomacy, a certain level of maturity and patience combined with inputs from government departments such as DHET and DIRCO often helps to achieve an optimal solution acceptable to all members of the BTTC. This principle also holds good for all engagements and interactions with South African public and non-governmental stakeholders participating in the Academic Forum, BRICS Business Council, BRICS labour, and BRICS Civil Society consultations.

### **7.2. Academic & Civil Society Engagement & Commitment**

Engagements with academics and civil society organizations are often hampered by institutional and financial constraints. Identified individuals and institutions very often expect to be compensated for their time and effort. Academics in particular are concerned that the papers and research they present at BRICS seminars and Academic Forums do not receive the due recognition by their institutions because such work is not recognized as part of the university list of key performance goals and objectives for which academics should be rewarded. It will be important for government and the NIHSS to address this issue to provide more concrete incentives for academics undertaking BRICS related research and activities.

### **7.3. Engagement with the BRICS Business Council and Labour Movement**

Sustained engagement with the BRICS Business Council and the South African Labour movement has proved elusive. Apart from the initial consultations and engagements in writing up the BRICS Long Term Strategy Documents both business and organized labour did not actively participate. Perhaps this was due to the lack of time and space. However, SABTT needs to develop a more focused strategy for engaging with these sectors. Of particular concern is that while the BRICS Business Council is a formally constituted BRICS instrument that meets regularly the labour movement in BRICS countries does not have a formal equivalent vehicle across BRICS to give expression to the concerns of labour.

### **7.4. Engagements and relationship with Government Departments**

Being a statutory research council the HSRC has developed long standing collaborative and client relationships with many government departments and was able to use these relationships for multi-disciplinary BRICS related research. It will be important for the government hosts of the SABTT to facilitate such collaborative and cooperative relationships between the NIHSS and government departments. A particular area of concern is obtaining visas for researchers from other BRICS and African countries. While this issue is being discussed in BRICS for promoting the ease of doing business for members of the BRICS Business Council a similar initiative needs to be explored for BRICS and African researchers engaged in BRICS studies.

### **7.5. Financing and funding of SABTT activities**

Over the past two and half years government financing and funding of SABTT functions was channeled through the DHET with respect to BTTC and Academic Forum activities. However, other activities outside of these activities such as international relations, communications, operational management, civil society and business council engagements, data and information gathering were all financed by the HSRC's commitment to provide collateral funding support for its incubation of the SABTT. This was possible based on its own sources of revenue, and because of the HSRC's economies of scale and nation-wide infrastructure. Some of the activities funded under these conditions included work commissioned by some government departments facing severe budget constraints, and requiring HSRC policy support in terms of the HSRC Act as a statutory research body. The issue of options for financing, funding and supporting the wide range of SABTT activities need to be given serious consideration to ensure that SABTT carries out its mandate successfully.

## **8. Conclusion**

The report is intended to provide the DHET with a comprehensive picture and understanding of how the HSRC, in the form of its BRICS Secretariat and the BRICS Research Centre, managed the work during its tenure as the incubator of SABTT. The aim of the report is not only to provide a record but also present a clear guide of the processes, principles, and institutional framework that informs the activities of the SABTT and other BRICS related institutions. We also pledge the services and support of the HSRC BRICS Research Centre to the NIHSS, DHET, DIRCO and other relevant government departments in their endeavours to make the SABTT a think tank of excellence amongst its BRICS peers.

