

# EVIDENCE REPORT

No 11

Rising Powers in International Development

Policy Network Agenda  
Johannesburg, 20 March 2013:  
IDS Rising Powers in International Development  
Advisory Council Discussion

Musab Younis

July 2013

The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Rising Powers in International Development theme.

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## **POLICY NETWORK AGENDA JOHANNESBURG, 20 MARCH 2013: IDS RISING POWERS IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Musab Younis

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# 1 Introduction

This document presents a summary of a discussion held on 20 March 2013 between five members of the Advisory Council of the IDS Rising Powers in International Development (RPID) programme and three IDS RPID staff members (for a full list of participants see Appendix). The discussion was held on Wits University campus in Johannesburg with five people present; a further three participated by phone. The aim was to report back to the Advisory Council on developments in the RPID programme since a week of events had been initiated in Johannesburg immediately preceding the BRICS Summit 2013.

## 2 Agenda

The following agenda was discussed:

- BRICS civil society/academic forum updates
- South Africa events updates
- Areas for Advisory Council focus
- The BRICS and agriculture in Africa
- A new Chinese development policy network

## 3 Key discussion points

- The civil society sessions being run by the RPID programme in South Africa during the week of 18 March 2013 were discussed. These were seen to have been productive and useful. Brazilian colleagues from these sessions had expressed confidence that the Brazilian government will offer to hold a civil society forum in 2014 parallel to the BRICS Summit. This is likely to take place alongside the media and academic forums. The Advisory Council agreed to keep tabs on developments in this area. Potential Brazilian partners for RPID events leading up to the 2014 BRICS Summit in Brazil were discussed. These partners – CEBRAP and the BRICS Policy Centre (BPC) – would both give the RPID programme a highly experienced partnership in Brazil. The choice of partner depends on the location of the Summit, which has not yet been announced. Meanwhile discussion on the BRICS academic forum revealed that this forum is restricted to academics from the BRICS countries only. While the BPC would be happy to broker, they cannot officially invite the IDS RPID programme to the forum.
- Updates were given on the South Africa RPID events being run during the week of 18 March 2013. There was positive feedback on the partnership with SAIIA, with whom the South Africa country study contract was also being negotiated. SAIIA have agreed to work with the RPID programme as partners on this country study, being led by IDS Fellow Hayley MacGregor. Lizbeth Navas-Alemán is to support this study from the business side. Lizbeth gave the Council an update on her meetings with South African business community and government agencies, which will form part of the research for her 'Business from the BRICS' RPID study.

- An update on the Future Agricultures Conference, held on Monday 18 March 2013 in Pretoria, South Africa, was given to the Council. A plenary session titled, 'The BRICS and African Agriculture' brought together Arilson Favareto (Cebrap/UFABC, Brazil), Sachin Chaturvedi (RIS, India), Li Xiaoyun (CAU, China) and Ruth Hall (PLAAS, South Africa) to speak from a range of perspectives about the growing role of these countries in shaping new directions for agricultural development in Africa. Another session, chaired by RPID co-convenor Alex Shankland and FAC researcher Lidia Cabral, focused specifically on Brazilian and Chinese engagement in African agriculture, with the presentation of four detailed country studies from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Ghana.
- The 'State of the Debate' studies were discussed, with a meeting on this between IDS and partner researchers scheduled for the next day (21 March 2013). This meeting would focus on lessons learned from carrying out these studies, particularly with regard to capturing a fast-moving target, how to synthesise results from different studies, and how to ask sensitive questions when government organisations may be reluctant to express opinions. Council members expressed eagerness to see the results of the studies, suggesting that they looked likely to form useful pieces of work. There was also discussion over the appropriate form of synthesis for this product. Two options were suggested. The first was a special journal issue containing the country chapters, framed by an introduction and conclusion. The second was a book which included the country chapters as well as some wider 'synthesis' analysis. The book or special journal issue would also be accompanied by the series of policy briefs that are being produced. No firm conclusion was reached on this matter.
- The International Development Policy Panel Discussion, held jointly with SAIIA at SAIIA's building in Johannesburg on 19 March 2013, was discussed with the Council (two Council members had spoken on the panel). The event was seen to have been successful and productive. People had recognised that the BRICS are having a very significant development impact in developing countries, and that this is one of the main dynamics in the world economy as we look ahead in next few decades. It had also been recognised that the BRICS are increasing development cooperation programmes in a dynamic way. A council member said that this provided the rationale and indicated the need for a Future Development Policy Network that is not formally attached to the BRICS (as the BRICS academic forum is), but that brings together a set of academic/research institutions.
- Possible areas for Advisory Council focus in the future were explored. In this context the growing convergence between the BRICS and traditional players in development policy was discussed, which could be a useful focus for the RPID programme. Work which has been conducted in the past by the OECD-DAC was thought to be potentially useful for future Advisory Council work, if that which can be used for evaluation and impact assessment can be drawn out. This had already been discussed with Indian and Brazilian counterparts: updates were given on this matter. There was also a suggestion that the Council examine closely the differential impact of the BRICS' agriculture in Africa – the big farm approach from Brazil, and the small-scale farm from China.

- It was suggested that one of the strengths of the Future Development Policy Network is its ability to bring interesting BRICS experiences and ideas to Africa. The idea of having these thematic approaches was seen to be a good one. Council members were conscious of the way this network needs to operate; it will be based in a Northern institution, but perhaps one of its strengths will be to facilitate informal discussion, which is easier than formal discussion between DAC and the BRICS. The network must be seen to be adding value to processes that take place within the BRICS. This is especially important given the impact of the multilateral aid system, in which the representation of the BRICS was seen by some as being badly handled by traditional donors. This issue was highlighted as a discussion topic for the next Advisory Council meeting in July 2013. It was agreed that the Council is right to press ahead with a Future Development Policy Network.
- Agriculture and unemployment in Africa were discussed. A primary problem was seen to be unemployment in Africa. A Council member expressed the hope that there would not simply be symbolic gestures to throw in smallholder farming while the actual focus of BRICS investment remains on very large-scale practices. Another member agreed, stating that the African situation means there is a lack of large-scale infrastructure, which makes agricultural investment costs very high. This was seen to increase the developmental importance of the smallholder farmer in a context where the African state can play a role to mitigate risks, provide public goods, and reduce costs.
- Next year's BRICS Summit was discussed, and the following question was raised: is it going to be in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro? Romulo Paes de Sousa, the Advisory Council member from Brazil, communicated by phone that although he did not yet have any information on this matter, he would monitor the situation.
- Finally, Li Xiaoyun, the Advisory Council member from China, discussed his new project, the China International Development Research Network (CIDRN). This is the first initiative for international development policy research in China. It aims to provide a platform for international development knowledge and experiences sharing among relevant academic institutions, international organisations, government agencies and individuals. On this platform, the information exchange and cooperation between China and international development communities shall be enhanced and the formulation and perfection of China's international development policy shall be facilitated. CIDRN could help to connect China's aid policy with guidelines set out by the OECD-DAC, working on issues like aid modality and transparency. Xiaoyun suggested that this network could link with the RPID Future Development Policy Network. Other Advisory Council members expressed interest in working with the CIDR. A way of linking this to the China Country Study, to be led by IDS Fellow Jing Gu, was flagged for future discussion.

# Appendix 1

## Advisory Council Members, Present

*Richard Carey*, Former Director, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD; Former co-chair China-DAC Study Group; Member of the IDS Board of Trustees.

*Merle Lipton (Phone)*, Associate Fellow, Chatham House Africa Programme; Visiting Research Fellow, King's College London.

*Richard Manning (Phone)*, President of the Advisory Council; Former Director-General for DFID; former Chair of the OECD DAC; Chair of the IDS Board of Trustees.

*Rômulo Paes de Sousa (Phone)*, IDS Senior International Associate; former Vice-Minister for Social Development, Government of Brazil.

*Li Xiaoyun*, Professor at the China Agricultural University, Director of the China-DAC Study Group.

## Advisory Council Members, Apologies

*K. Y. Amoako*, Founder-President of the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET); former Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); former member of the World Bank Institute's Advisory Council.

*Gabriele Köhler*, IDS Visiting Fellow; former UN official.

*Nora Lustig*, Professor at Tulane University; Fellow at the Center for Global Development; Co-founder and president of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA); Member of the IDS Board of Trustees.

*Rajesh Tandon*, Founder-President of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA); Member of the IDS Board of Trustees.

## IDS Staff, Present

*Lizbeth Navas-Alemán*, IDS Fellow and Co-Convenor of Rising Powers in International Development Programme.

*Alex Shankland*, IDS Fellow and Co-Convenor of Rising Powers in International Development Programme.

*Musab Younis*, IDS Research Officer for Rising Powers in International Development Programme.



Brighton BN1 9RE

T +44 (0)1273 606261

F +44 (0)1273 621202

E [ids@ids.ac.uk](mailto:ids@ids.ac.uk)

[www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)



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