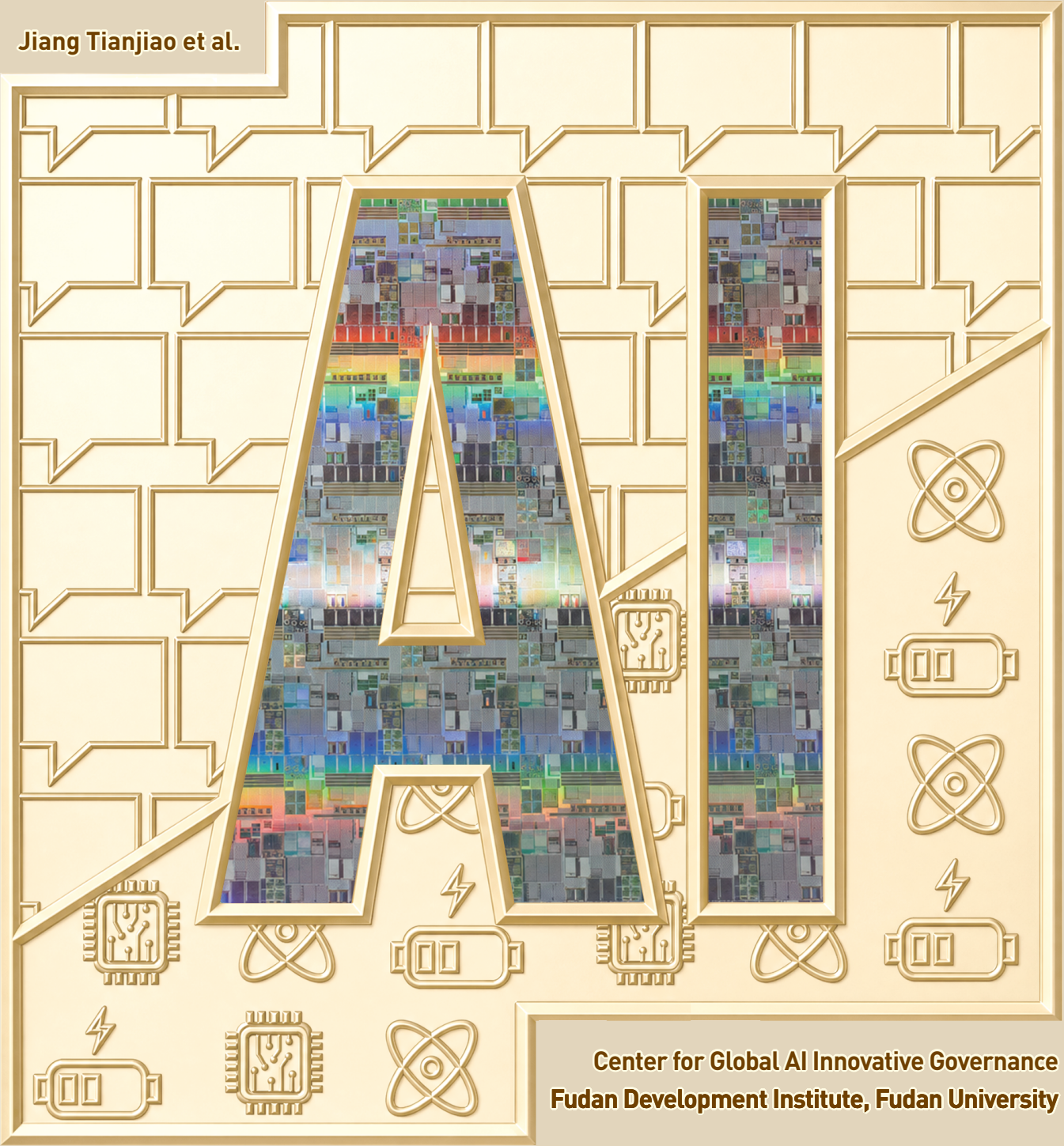


Greater BRICS AI Cooperation from a Global South Perspective: Opportunities and Challenges

Jiang Tianjiao et al.



Center for Global AI Innovative Governance
Fudan Development Institute, Fudan University





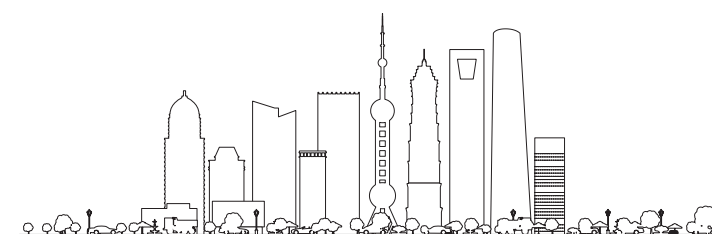
FUDAN REPORT SERIES

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Center for Global AI Innovative Governance (CGAIG)
Fudan Development Institute, Fudan University

July 2026



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I. Introduction

BRICS, a cooperation mechanism comprising representative emerging market economies, has steadily consolidated its foundation for cooperation and broadened its scope since its inception. It has now developed a multi-tiered architecture, led by the Leaders' Summit and supported by ministerial meetings including the Meeting of BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues and the Meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers, with practical cooperation spanning dozens of areas such as trade and commerce, finance, science and technology, agriculture, culture, education, health, think tanks, and sister cities. BRICS has thereby grown into a constructive force for driving global economic

growth, improving global governance, and advancing the democratization of international relations.^① The BRICS cooperation mechanism was initiated by Brazil, Russia, India, and China in 2006, marking the beginning of BRICS' internal and external cooperation. Since South Africa's official accession in 2011, the grouping has continued to expand. On January 1, 2024, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia became full members; Indonesia officially joined on January 6, 2025, bringing total membership to eleven, while a growing network of BRICS partner countries has gradually taken shape. Current BRICS members represent a combined population

^① Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. *BRICS*. https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjb_673085/zzjg_673183/gjjjs_674249/gjzzyhygk_674253/jzgj_674283/gk_674285/. July 2024.

of approximately 3.8 billion, nearly half the global total, and a total GDP of roughly USD 29.2 trillion, about one-third of global GDP,^① occupying an increasingly important position in the global political, economic, and technological landscape. As the digital economy rapidly expands, governments are attaching greater importance to the

role of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), in enhancing national innovation capacity, bolstering economic competitiveness, and facilitating industrial transformation and upgrading. BRICS countries, in particular, have made AI development and governance a key issue on their agenda.

^① Relevant indicators for BRICS member states, including population and GDP, have been aggregated by the author based on data from the World Bank and official national statistical agencies as of February 2025. The total global population and total global GDP, measured under the statistical framework of the World Bank's latest 2023 dataset, amount to 8.025 billion and US\$105.4 trillion respectively.

II. Drivers of Cooperation

Global governance, development, and security are closely interdependent; under previous global governance models, development policy and security agendas were not inherently complementary, necessitating continuous innovation in governance. Breakthroughs in AI are also influencing governance paradigms, while AI-driven technological innovation and industrial progress depend all the more on the support of effective AI governance. In recent years, BRICS countries have shown steadily growing enthusiasm for AI governance. AI is seen not merely as a means of enhancing economic efficiency,

but as an essential tool for addressing critical development challenges. Its broad applicability holds particular appeal for developing countries, offering a significant opportunity to address the challenges confronting BRICS countries, including weak intelligent industrial foundations, insufficient influence in international rule-making, and monopolization by developed countries in both rules and technology.

A. Development Imperatives: Upgrading Industry and Building Safeguards

Advances in AI technology and

industry require effective regulation and governance. It is now a widely held view among global leaders in frontier technology that development and security are complementary, not contradictory.^① As representatives of emerging economies, BRICS members face varying degrees of transformation pressure and governance challenges across technological development, industrial upgrading, and social governance that make effective governance urgently necessary to safeguard development.

First, in industrial upgrading and economic transformation, AI has become an even more prominent accelerator for emerging markets. Most BRICS countries have historically relied on resource-based or demographic dividend-driven industries, leaving them at the lower end of global value chains and in urgent need to move up. Brazil is rich in agricultural and mineral resources, but faces

insufficient high-tech product R&D; Russia possesses strong energy and raw material advantages, yet suffers from weak competitiveness in industrial products. India has a robust software sector and labor-cost advantages, but weak high-end manufacturing. China boasts a complete industrial chain but remains constrained by developed countries in advanced technology.^② Consequently, BRICS have an urgent need for technological innovation and industrial upgrading. A new consensus is emerging on AI's role in scientific progress and industrial development:

AI can effectively promote industrial upgrading, enhance productivity, and drive economic growth, with primary impacts on intelligent decision-making, labor market innovation, industrial transformation, and social governance.^③ Mining, the cornerstone of Brazil's economy, is seeing rapid AI adoption to optimize processes, improve operational safety, enable predictive machine maintenance, reduce

① Cecilia Kang, "OpenAI's Sam Altman Urges A.I. Regulation in Senate Hearing", *The New York Times*, May 16, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/technology/openai-altman-artificial-intelligence-regulation.html>.
② Lurong Chen, "The BRICs in the Global Value Chains: An Empirical Note", *Cuadernos de Economía* 31, no. 57 (2012): 221–239.
③ Chunhong Yuan, Jingyi Tang, YiDing Cao, Tianshi Wei, and Weitao Shen, "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Economic Development: A Systematic Review," *International Theory and Practice in Humanities and Social Sciences* 1, no. 1(2024): 130; Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, "Robots and Jobs: Evidence from US Labor Markets," *Journal of Political Economy* 128, no. 6 (2020): 2188–2244.

downtime, and increase cost efficiency.^① By strengthening AI research and application, emerging markets represented by BRICS can develop high-end manufacturing and technology-intensive industries, gradually moving towards mid-to-high-end segments of global value chains.

Second, rapid technological and industrial development necessitates continuously evolving governance paradigms. Development and security are two sides of the same coin. Balancing the two is a critical issue for all countries, and the interplay among technology, industry, and governance is receiving growing attention. BRICS faces a host of challenges: strains on labor markets and social welfare systems, widening domestic, regional, and social divides, and mounting environmental and sustainability pressures. These challenges demand strengthened governance capacity and deeper institutional reform. Frontier

technologies like artificial intelligence can powerfully enable social governance, but their effectiveness is directly contingent upon institutional quality.^② When a lack of appropriate policy regulation undermines institutional quality, the economic contribution of AI applications may be curtailed, potentially resulting in misguided socioeconomic policies, technological divides, social inequity, and privacy risks.^③

B. Discourse Imperatives: Strengthening and Expanding Global Influence

At the global level, AI governance remains exploratory and competitive, with geopolitical factors and complex divergences among political, market, and technological logics constraining its progress.^④ Currently, no unified or universally applicable international rules or normative instruments exists in AI governance; developed countries have already secured a dominant

position in formulating international AI rules, marginalizing emerging markets represented by BRICS.

Following the rapid development of generative AI in early 2023, the United States and Europe led the effort to establish global AI governance rules, and in May of that year, the G7 launched the Hiroshima AI Process at its summit in Hiroshima, emphasizing “responsible” use of AI technology.^① Developed countries are thus likely to dominate the discourse on global AI governance rules. If BRICS lacks a collective response mechanism in technological innovation and institutional shaping, it will remain passive in global AI governance competition. In this context, the core challenge for BRICS is how to build consensus and act collectively to offset developed countries’ advantages in discourse and rule-making.

Furthermore, issues of vital concern to

developing countries, such as the global AI divide and technological equity, have long been neglected. Many developing countries face shortcomings in basic research, industrial support, and talent reserves, with the global AI divide continuing to widen. Governance solutions that accommodate developing country needs and embody technological equity often struggle to reach mainstream agendas.^② BRICS countries, located primarily in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, could see AI create enormous value for billions of people in areas such as public health, smart agriculture, and urban governance, yet their resources remain scarce. When discussing AI governance, ethics, and regulation, the United States and Europe rarely touch upon issues like digital capacity building or cross-border technology assistance.^③ With vast markets and technological potential, BRICS nonetheless lacks joint platforms and communication channels to make their voices heard, thereby limiting their ability to secure greater influence in international AI

① “Applications of AI in Brazil,” AX Legal, February 5, 2025, <https://ax.legal/2025/02/05/applications-of-ai-in-brazil>.

② Najim Azahaf and Daniel Schraad-Tischler, *Governance Capacities in the BRICS*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, July 15, 2021, https://www.sgi-network.org/docs/studies/Governance_Capacities_in_the_BRICS.pdf.

③ Adebola Folorunso, Kehinde Olanipekun, Temitope Adewumi, and Bunmi Samuel, “A Policy Framework on AI Usage in Developing Countries and Its Impact”, *Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances* 21, no. 1 (2024): 154; Charles Shaaba Saba and Nara Monkam, “Artificial Intelligence’s (AI’s) Role in Enhancing Tax Revenue, Institutional Quality, and Economic Growth in Selected BRICS-Plus Countries”, *Journal of Social and Economic Development* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-024-00401-0>.

④ Lu Chuanying, “Goals, Challenges and China’s Approach to Global Artificial Intelligence Governance”, *Contemporary World*, no. 5 (2024): 25–31.

① Jiang Tianjiao, “Japan Seeks Discursive Power in International AI Rule-Making Through the Hiroshima Process”, *The Paper*, March 19, 2024, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_26720256.

② United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Technology and Innovation Report 2025: Inclusive Artificial Intelligence for Development* (Geneva: United Nations, 2025), <https://unctad.org/publication/technology-and-innovation-report-2025>.

③ Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences et al., *Research Report on Global Artificial Intelligence Governance*, World Internet Conference, 22 November 2024, https://cn.wicinternet.org/2024-11/22/content_37693427.htm.

rule-making and standard-setting.

C. Security Imperatives: Escaping Technological Constraints and Rule Monopolies

Although BRICS possess large markets and rich application scenarios, they still face significant challenges and constraints in frontier AI algorithms, high-end chip manufacturing, and international standard-setting. Western developed countries wield greater influence in AI and other digital rule domains, with some exporting their own regulatory models through diplomatic influence, multinational tech corporations, and dominant positions in international organizations, thereby forming a “regulatory circle” led by developed countries. Building on this, developed countries further transform the “high-standard” rules recognized within this circle into international consensus and, through industrial alliances or geopolitical economic influence, press other countries to accept

corresponding regulatory patterns. For example, leveraging its legislative foundation in digital regulation and privacy protection, the European Union has enacted a series of digital technology laws, including the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) and the *Artificial Intelligence Act* (AI Act), producing a “Brussels Effect” on numerous countries worldwide. The pull of the EU market leads multinational corporations to voluntarily apply EU rules to their global operations.^① When formulating domestic AI norms, BRICS countries must often balance domestic realities with external compliance requirements, making it difficult to take the initiative in the competition over international rule-setting; instead, they risk being constrained in technological paths and rule-making discourse. To break the potential monopoly of developed countries in global AI governance, BRICS countries must urgently forge rule-making synergy and exercise initiative and creativity.

^① Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

III. Opportunities for Cooperation

A. Emphasis on National Strategic Planning

BRICS countries place great emphasis on AI. Beginning with the strategic plans released by China and the UAE in 2017, both

initiating members and those that joined later have prioritized high-level national AI strategic planning. After publishing their first strategic documents in 2021, Brazil and Egypt updated their next-phase plans in 2024 and 2025, respectively.

Table 1: National AI Strategies of BRICS Countries

Member State	National Strategy	Release Date
China	<i>New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan</i>	2017
UAE	<i>National AI Strategy 2031</i>	2017
India	<i>National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence; India AI Mission</i>	2018
Russia	<i>National Strategy for the Development of AI through 2030</i>	2019
Saudi Arabia	<i>National Strategy for Data & AI (NSDAI); AI Adoption Framework 2025</i>	2020
Indonesia	<i>National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2020–2045 (Stranas KA); National AI Roadmap White Paper</i>	2020, 2025
Brazil	<i>Plano Brasileiro de Inteligência Artificial (PBIA) 2024-2028</i>	2024
Egypt	<i>Egyptian AI Strategy</i>	2021, 2025
South Africa	<i>South Africa National Artificial Intelligence Policy Framework (2024); South African AI Policy Draft</i>	2024, 2026
Ethiopia	<i>National Artificial Intelligence Policy; Digital Ethiopia 2030</i>	2024
Iran	<i>National Artificial Intelligence Document</i>	2024

China was one of the earliest BRICS members to release a national AI strategic plan. In July 2017, the State Council issued the *New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan*, proposing a “trinity” approach that advances AI research, product application, and industrial development in a coordinated manner.^① At

around the same time, the UAE released its *National AI Strategy 2031*, aiming to harness AI to improve government performance by deploying integrated intelligent digital systems capable of addressing challenges and delivering rapid, effective solutions. The strategy seeks to position the UAE among global leaders in AI-related investment

① State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *Notice on Issuing the New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan*, July 20, 2017, https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-07/20/content_5211996.htm.

and to develop new markets with broad economic value.^① India’s NITI Aayog issued the *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence* in 2018, highlighting AI’s role in driving economic development and seeking to balance innovation with safety governance through proactive regulation.^② In 2019, Russia outlined its national AI development strategy, goals, and plans extending to 2030.

In August 2020, Indonesia launched the *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2020–2045* (*Strategi Nasional Kecerdasan Artifisial*, or *Stranas KA*) on National Technology Awakening Day, setting out a vision to ensure ethical, inclusive AI development that benefits all social strata by 2045.^③ The National Council for Artificial Intelligence, Egypt’s national AI body, released its first national AI strategy

in January 2021, and an updated version in January 2025, setting targets and a roadmap for 2025–2030 and committing to creating over 250 AI startups.^④ The South African government introduced the *South Africa National Artificial Intelligence Policy Framework* in 2024, seeking to harness AI’s transformative potential to drive economic growth, enhance social welfare, and promote digital transformation across sectors. Policy priorities include creating a robust AI ecosystem through coordinated R&D, talent training, and infrastructure development.^⑤ Ethiopia’s Council of Ministers unanimously adopted the National Artificial Intelligence Policy in 2024, proposing to leverage AI to promote economic development and enhance global competitiveness.^⑥ Iran adopted a comprehensive *National*

① United Arab Emirates Government, “UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence”, November 7, 2023, <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/government-services-and-digital-transformation/uae-strategy-for-artificial-intelligence>.

② NITI Aayog, *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence*, Government of India, June 2018, <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/National-Strategy-for-Artificial-Intelligence.pdf>.

③ DiploFoundation, “The Indonesian National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence”, *DigWatch*, July 2020, <https://dig.watch/resource/the-indonesian-national-strategy-on-artificial-intelligence>.

④ Carrington Malin, “Egyptian President Launches 2025–2030 National AI Strategy”, *Middle East AI News*, January 23, 2025, <https://www.middleeastainews.com/p/egypt-president-el-sisi-launches-ai-strategy>.

⑤ Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, *South Africa’s National AI Policy Framework*, Government of South Africa, October 2024, https://www.dcdt.gov.za/images/phocadownload/AI_Government_Summit/National_AI_Government_Summit_Discussion_Document.pdf.

⑥ Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute, “The Council of Ministers Unanimously Decide to Implement the National Artificial Intelligence Policy”, June 27, 2024, <https://aii.et/the-council-of-ministers-unanimously-decide-to-implement-the-national-artificial-intelligence-policy>.

Artificial Intelligence Strategy document and established a high-level National AI organization reporting directly to the President on July 23, 2024, to coordinate resources across departments and organizations and formulate national AI strategies and plans.^①

BRICS members' national AI strategic plans share several commonalities. Firstly, multiple strategies explicitly call for establishing dedicated inter-agency coordination bodies and fostering a shared governance framework. In addition to Iran's National Artificial Intelligence Organization (NAIO), Russia's Russian Commission on Ethics in Artificial Intelligence, Egypt's National Council for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI), and the UAE's Council for Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain all serve as important platforms for coordinating national AI development and governance. These different institutional arrangements reflect members' varying visions of AI governance. For example, the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority

(SDAIA) comprises three core bodies, the National Data Management Office (NDMO), the National Information Center (NIC), and the National Center for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI), reflecting the Kingdom's vision of converging data, infrastructure, and AI development and underscoring data as the bedrock of the AI era. Secondly, nearly all BRICS members emphasize forward-looking deployment and long-term planning in their AI development and governance strategies, with most looking ahead to around 2030; Indonesia's plan even extends to the mid-century point of 2045. Furthermore, members seek to align their AI strategic plans with the growth of their digital economies and their broader, long-term national development strategies. The UAE's AI strategy, for instance, is explicitly aligned with the nation's "Centennial 2071" goals as a key component of its overarching centennial master plan. Finally, BRICS AI strategies generally prioritize regional and global leadership, striking a balance among innovation capacity, industrial development, and

national security. They also focus on critical areas such as AI-enabled healthcare, agriculture, education, industrial digital transformation, urban governance, and social welfare systems.

B. Focus on Infrastructure Cooperation

The deployment of AI applications depends first on the comprehensiveness and accessibility of digital infrastructure, including computing power, storage, networks, and cloud services. BRICS countries generally pursue a parallel strategy of "autonomous control plus open cooperation", combining national planning with international partnerships to reinforce technological sovereignty while addressing gaps in local ecosystems. In terms of digital infrastructure, although BRICS countries differ in resource endowments and market demands, the overall trend points toward strengthening self-reliant and controllable computing power, promoting universal network coverage, introducing sustainable energy solutions, and gradually upgrading underlying infrastructure through public-private partnerships, thereby providing robust support for AI industry ecosystems. For example, Brazil launched the *Brazilian Artificial Intelligence Plan* (PBIA 2024–2028)

in 2024, allocating approximately USD 4 billion in dedicated funding to support the construction of domestic data center clusters and the localization of storage chip production. Chinese firm Shenzhen Longsys Electronics Co., Ltd. invested RMB 859 million to expand its storage chip packaging and testing line in São Paulo, and partnered with the Brazilian National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) to establish a dedicated AI infrastructure fund, channeling private capital into network modernization in rural and remote areas.

India's *India AI Mission* received approximately USD 1.25 billion in government funding for purchasing NVIDIA chips, building national AI computing platforms, and establishing "Center of Excellence in AI". Additionally, the Indian government, through NITI Aayog, partnered with international cloud service providers, including Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft, and Google, to establish joint laboratories, providing computing resources to startups and research institutions.

Indonesia is leveraging the "Palapa Ring" submarine cable project alongside nationwide 4G/5G base station upgrades to build local AI cloud computing and data

^① Seyed Hossein Sadat Meidani, "From Algebra to Artificial Intelligence: Iran's Legacy for Development of World Science and Technology", *Middle East Political and Economic Institute*, September 16, 2024, <https://mepei.com/from-algebra-to-artificial-intelligence-irans-legacy-for-development-of-world-science-and-technology/>; "Iran Inaugurates National AI Organization to Spearhead Technological Advancements", *Iran Press*, July 9, 2024, <https://iranpress.com/iran-inaugurates-national-ai-organization-to-spearhead-technological-advancements>.

centers in cooperation with Microsoft and Alibaba Cloud. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are taking the lead in the deployment of green supercomputing in the Middle East. The “Shaheen-3” supercomputer, supported by Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund (PIF), is equipped with tens of thousands of GPUs and cooperates with the Saudi energy sector to integrate solar and wind power into data center cooling and power supply systems. In the UAE, G42 Group has invested substantially in building computing clusters in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, establishing a global cloud service network oriented towards AI industry development.

C. Focus on Data, Ethics, and Standards

Data governance serves as the institutional cornerstone of sound AI development, encompassing personal privacy protection, data sovereignty maintenance, and cross-border data flow rule-making. All BRICS countries have enacted or are accelerating domestic data legislation and regulatory capacity building, though they vary considerably in their degrees of maturity and diverge in implementation details. BRICS countries share significant common

ground in establishing legal and regulatory frameworks, balancing innovation with protection, and promoting alignment with international rules, while exhibiting diverse practices in legal specifics, implementation mechanisms, and cross-border coordination. First, Brazil enacted the *General Personal Data Protection Act (Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados Pessoais, LGPD)* in 2020, and established the National Data Protection Authority (ANPD) to oversee end-to-end regulation. The LGPD covers individuals, enterprises, and government agencies, imposing clear obligations and penalties for the processing of personal data of Brazilian citizens both within and outside Brazil.^① In 2024, the ANPD issued the *AI Security Incident Reporting Regulation*, requiring immediate reporting of high-risk incidents such as algorithmic bias and data breaches; simultaneously, it issued a *Simplified Compliance Guide* for micro, small, and medium enterprises, allowing the use of de-identified data under fundamental legal principles so as to balance privacy protection with technological innovation.

Second, India enacted the *Digital Per-*

sonal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDPA). Building on the *National Data Governance Framework Policy* released in 2022, the Act seeks to establish a dual-track mechanism featuring “strong regulation and orderly flows”.^① The DPDPA explicitly defines data subjects’ rights to access, correction, deletion, and refusal of automated decision-making, and establishes the Central Data Protection Authority (DPA). The 2025 implementation rules further refined the scope of compliant use of AI training data and the conditions for cross-border transmission, requiring impact assessments and the retention of audit records prior to algorithm training to ensure transparency and accountability.

Third, Russia upholds the principle of data sovereignty and has amended the *Federal Law on Personal Data* (No. 152-FZ), requiring that the initial collection, storage, and processing of personal data relating to Russian citizens occur domestically, with any cross-border transmission subject to approval by the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor). In 2024, at the BRICS Lead-

ers’ Summit in Kazan, Russia proposed a “Global South Data Governance Framework”, advocating that developing countries be given an equal voice in cross-border data flow rule-making, and promoted multilateral data cooperation models.

Fourth, South Africa’s *Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)*, enacted in 2013, serves as the legal cornerstone, requiring automated decision-making to be accompanied by human review and prohibiting the use of sensitive personal information for algorithmic model training without explicit consent. In 2024, the South African government issued the *National Cloud and Data Policy*, promoting government cloud platforms and regional data center construction, and negotiating mutual recognition agreements on cross-border data compliance with the African Union, seeking to establish a data governance community at the regional level.

Fifth, under external sanctions pressure, Iran implemented the *Cyberspace Data and Privacy Protection Act* (commonly referred to as the *Protection Bill*) and the National Information Network (NIN) sys-

^① Ecomply.io, “General Personal Data Protection Act (LGPD),” accessed May 20, 2026, <https://lgpd-brazil.info/>.

^① Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, *Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025*, Government of India, January 3, 2025, <https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2024/06/2bf1f0e9f04e6fb4f8fef35e82c42aa5.pdf>.

tem to ensure localized storage and processing of critical industry data and core government data. The *National Data and Information Management Law*, promulgated in 2022, for the first time defined data as a “national strategic asset”, requiring centralized government management and analysis, and promoting data sharing and security audits through national-level AI platforms to reduce dependence on external services.^①

AI technology R&D, social responsibility, ethics, and industrial application norms are governance issues of universal concern to BRICS members. As AI is widely applied in education, healthcare, elderly care, and urban governance, social risks from technological development, such as labor market shocks, widening income gaps, and ethical challenges, are emerging. A notable example is the debate and concern surrounding AI-driven job displacement prompted by the rapid expansion of autonomous ride-hailing

services across various countries.

In formulating ethical guidelines, BRICS countries generally focus on issues including fairness in AI systems, the identification of and response to risk and liability, transparency and explainability, and robustness and safety. The *UAE AI Ethics: Principles and Guidelines* emphasize that the design and application of AI must align with human values and promote social welfare; the “human-centred” principle is gaining increasing recognition. Furthermore, BRICS countries actively regulate AI algorithms and formulate standards and guidelines, adopting more granular approaches at the industrial level, with particular attention to high-risk technologies liable to disrupt social order. For example, China, Russia, and the UAE have devoted particular attention to the regulation of deepfake technology, enacting dedicated laws or regulations to prevent social harm arising from technology misuse.

① Recorded Future, *Iran’s AI Ambitions: Balancing Economic Isolation with National Security Imperatives*, April 17, 2025, <https://www.recordedfuture.com/research/irans-ai-ambitions-balancing-economic-isolation-national-security-imperatives>.

Table 2: BRICS AI Regulatory Documents

Member State	Data Protection	Ethics	Algorithm & Application Standards
Brazil	<i>General Personal Data Protection Act (LGPD)</i> AI and data protection regulatory sandbox	-	-
Russia	<i>Federal Law on Personal Data</i> (No. 152-FZ)	<i>Concept for the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics until 2024</i>	-
India	<i>Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDPA)</i>	<i>The Principles for Responsible AI; India AI Governance Guidelines</i>	<i>Operationalizing Principles for Responsible AI</i>
China	<i>Cybersecurity Law; Data Security Law</i>	<i>Ethical Norms for New Generation Artificial Intelligence; Measures for Scientific and Technological Ethics Review (for Trial Implementation); Measures for the Identification of AI-Generated Synthetic Content; Trial Guideline on the Ethics Review and Service of Artificial Intelligence Technology</i>	<i>Provisions on the Administration of Deep Synthesis of Internet Information Services; Provisions on the Management of Algorithmic Recommendations for Internet Information Services</i>
South Africa	<i>Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)</i>	-	-
Egypt	<i>Law No. 151 of 2020 Promulgating the Personal Data Protection Law</i>	<i>Egyptian Charter for Responsible AI; Egypt’s National Generative AI Guidelines; Egypt National Guidelines for Trustworthy and Responsible AI; Egypt’s National AI Governance Framework</i>	-
UAE	<i>Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL)</i>	<i>UAE AI Ethics: Principles and Guidelines; The UAE Charter for the Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence</i>	<i>UAE Deepfake Guide</i>

Member State	Data Protection	Ethics	Algorithm & Application Standards
Saudi Arabia	Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL)	<i>Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI; Code of Conduct Guidelines on Responsible and Trusted Artificial Intelligence in the Financial Technology Industry; Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidelines For Public</i>	<i>Deepfakes Guidelines: Mitigating Risks While Fostering Innovation</i>
Indonesia	Personal Data Protection Law (Law No. 27 of 2022)	<i>Circular Letter on Artificial Intelligence Ethics</i>	<i>Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Government Services</i>

D. Focus on AI Development and Application in Key Sectors

AI’s core value lies in its ability to solve real-world problems. BRICS countries are implementing demonstration projects in key sectors including agriculture, healthcare, finance, and energy, adopting a strategy of “targeted pilots with broad demonstrative impact” to accelerate the translation of technology from laboratory to productivity. Relevant development strategies aim to advance continuously from technology validation to large-scale deployment, accumulating cross-sectoral, multi-scenario experience and offering

replicable pathways and models for global AI governance.

For example, Ethiopia has identified agriculture and basic healthcare as key priorities for AI application. The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAI), in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, has fed Landsat satellite imagery and drone data into machine learning models to monitor crop growth, predict yields, and identify pests and diseases. India is comprehensively advancing AI applications in smart agriculture, intelligent transportation, and online education. Under the “Digital India” platform, the

Indian government has partnered with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to develop intelligent irrigation and pest control systems. Indian online education platforms such as Byju’s leverage recommendation algorithms to deliver personalized courses to millions of students. In the UAE, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has cooperated with local renewable energy firm Masdar to launch an AI-based carbon emissions monitoring and optimization platform. At the upcoming BRICS Summit, members and partner countries are expected to achieve more concrete outcomes in cooperation, particularly in advancing AI applications in agriculture, healthcare, finance, and energy.

E. Focus on Talent Development

Sustainable AI ecosystems require multilevel, interdisciplinary talent pool. BRICS countries are generally building talent ecosystems across four dimensions, namely basic education, vocational training, university research, and international cooperation, seeking to establish a “full-spectrum” talent pipeline that extends from broad-based training to advanced research cultivation, thereby closing basic digital

skills gaps and building a robust talent base for high-quality AI industry development.

China initiated the establishment of the “China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center”, aimed at promoting policy dialogue, technical exchanges, and talent development cooperation in AI. The BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution Innovation Center (PNIR) in Xiamen has also collaborated with other BRICS countries to advance human resource capacity building, digital upskilling, and intelligent manufacturing training programs, and has established the “Jinlu” (Golden Egret) Scholarship. In addition to launching an AI professional certification program through the *Brazilian Artificial Intelligence Plan (PBIA)* in 2024, Brazil has partnered with Microsoft and IBM to launch the ConectAI project, which provides free digital literacy and AI engineering skills courses to disadvantaged urban and rural groups. Through the “Future Skills” project, India has established national scholarships and doctoral funding programs to encourage students to pursue advanced AI education. The Indian government has also cooperated with Google, Amazon, and other companies to establish local training centers, having

already helped millions acquire digital skills.

F. A Global Governance Agenda for Domestic and International Cooperation

On the one hand, the BRICS cooperation mechanism sees AI as a catalyst for economic growth, technological progress, and social inclusion, and it is committed to fostering collaboration both within and outside the organization. On 24 October 2024, the 16th BRICS Summit issued the *Kazan Declaration*, highlighting that rapid advances in AI could create new opportunities for global socio-economic development, and encouraging further international dialogue, support for the United Nations’ key role in global AI governance, and continued consultation on AI issues, including through deeper practical cooperation via the BRICS Institute of Future Networks (BIFN). In accordance with the *Declaration of the 6th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting* and the *Declaration of the 7th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting*, BIFN established an “AI Research Group”, focusing on key technologies, algorithms, standards, and application scenarios in AI, and conducting joint BRICS research. Furthermore,

the China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center was officially launched on 19 July 2024. At its inauguration ceremony in Shanghai on 3 January 2025, the Center launched the Innovation Cooperation Platform, providing functions including industry matchmaking, technology transfer, and talent training.

On the other hand, BRICS members have also advanced their respective national positions and approaches to global AI governance. China and the UAE, for instance, both champion a human-centred, responsible vision of AI development. While advocating for deeper global cooperation, they call for a greater voice for developing countries and a sustained focus on AI safety, ethics, and sustainability. On 20 October 2023, China proposed the *Global AI Governance Initiative*, which promotes a “people-centred approach and the principle of AI for good”, and sets out the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. It calls for developing risk assessment and corresponding regulatory mechanisms, upholds fairness, ethics, and broad participation, and places specific emphasis on amplifying the voice of developing countries and the role of the UN framework. On 4 July 2024, at

the World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, China issued the *Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance*. The Declaration centres on key tenets: promoting AI development, safeguarding AI security, building AI governance systems, strengthening social participation and public AI literacy, and improving quality of life and social welfare, calling for collective efforts to address challenges in safety and ethics.

In October 2024, the UAE Cabinet approved its international AI policy position paper, which sets out six core principles: progress, cooperation, society, ethics, sustainability, and security. The priority areas covered include participating in international AI standard-setting, ensuring the safety and privacy protection of AI applications, and promoting the responsible use of AI to advance regional and global peace and stability.

Table 3: BRICS AI Global Governance Documents

Member State	Global Governance Agenda
China	<i>Global Initiative on AI Governance</i> (2023); <i>Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance</i> (2024); <i>AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for ALL</i> (2024); <i>Global AI Governance Action Plan</i> (2025); <i>AI+ International Cooperation Initiative</i> (2025)
UAE	<i>UAE International Position on Artificial Intelligence Policy</i> (2024)
BRICS	<i>BRICS Leaders’ Statement on Global AI Governance</i> (2025)

IV. Divergences and Challenges

Despite rapid development and substantial technological and market potential, the expanded BRICS inevitably faces greater diversity and higher coordination costs. Recognizing these challenges clearly is essential to further advancing BRICS AI cooperation and achieving quality-driven development.

A. The AI Divide Among BRICS Members

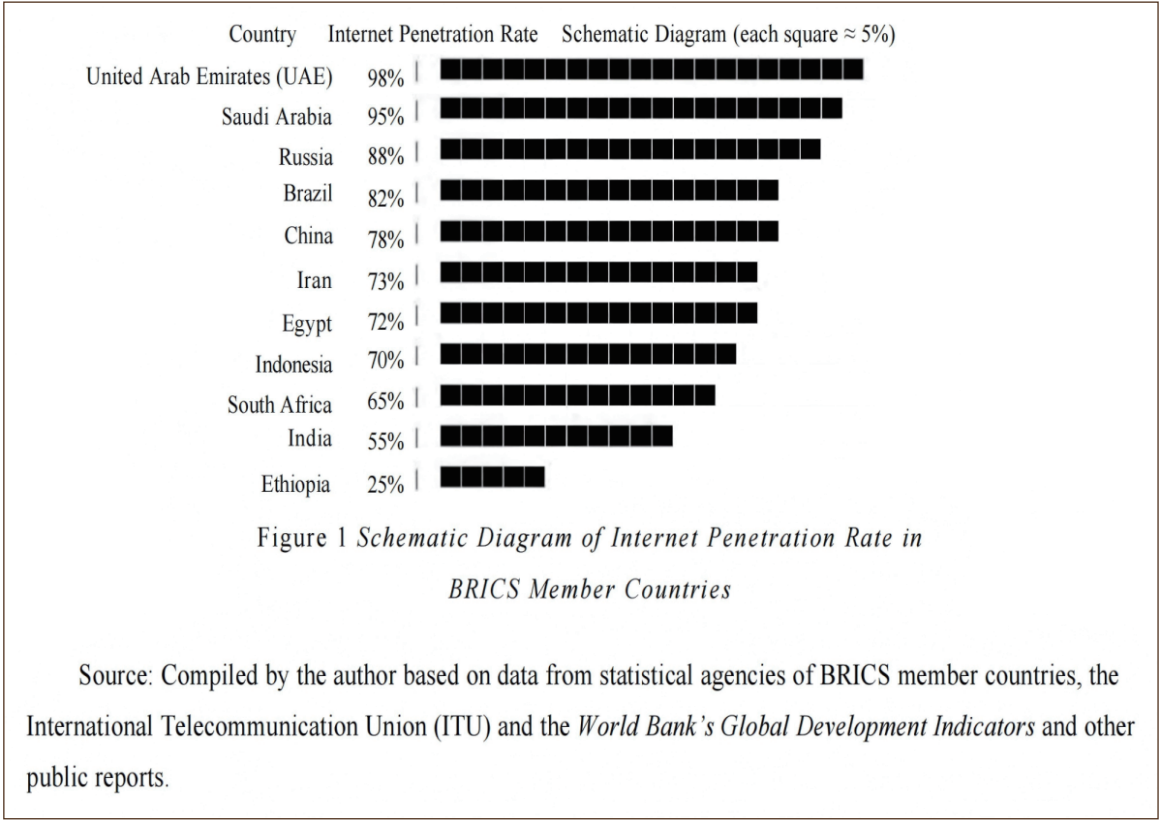
AI development requires information and digital infrastructure, technological innovation and industrial ecosystems, as well as talent development and exchange.

BRICS countries face considerable capability gaps in these areas, which not only affect their industrial upgrading and economic transformation, but also impede cooperation among BRICS members.

First, the electricity and digital infrastructure divide. Ethiopia faces particularly acute electricity supply challenges among BRICS members. According to World Bank data, as of 2022, Ethiopia’s national electricity access rate stood at only approximately 55% on average, with rural areas still below 50%.^① With the exception of Ethiopia, all other BRICS

^① World Bank, “Access to Electricity [% of Population] – Ethiopia”, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=ET>.

members have achieved near-universal electricity access. This uneven access directly affects the deployment of AI applications in areas such as data center construction, cloud computing infrastructure, and smart cities. Internet penetration rates also vary considerably across BRICS members, ranging from 25% in Ethiopia to near 100% in the UAE, with India facing significant internal disparities at just over half.



Second, the divide in foundational AI technologies and industrial development. BRICS members vary considerably in core technology R&D, algorithmic innovation, and high-end equipment manufacturing. In the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024, published by the World Intellectual Property

Organization (WIPO), China ranked 11th, standing as the only middle-income economy in the top 30.^① Specifically in AI, China holds a dominant position in global patent competition. According to Stanford University’s *Artificial Intelligence Index Report 2024*, in 2022 China led the world

^① Source: World Intellectual Property Organization, *Global Innovation Index 2024: Global Launch Summary*, October 4, 2024, <https://www.wipo.int/web/global-innovation-index/w/news/2024/gii-2024-global-launch-summary>. It is also worth noting that China, Türkiye, India, Viet Nam, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Morocco are the eight middle-income economies with the fastest-climbing GII rankings since 2013, four of which are BRICS member states.

with 61.1% of patent filings, significantly exceeding the United States' share of 20.9%, while other BRICS members' overall shares remained relatively low. The UAE, home to the globally recognized AI firm G42, is relatively advanced in AI industry development among BRICS countries; Saudi Arabia possesses substantial financial resources; Indonesia hosts the largest digital technology platform market in Southeast Asia; Brazil has been expanding its digital infrastructure at a comparatively rapid pace; and India boasts one of the world's highest AI skill penetration rates. Yet, given the uneven levels of technological and industrial development across BRICS countries, an AI technology and industry divide has already emerged.

Third, the divide in foundational AI talent development. As a result of sanctions, countries such as Russia and Iran face restricted researcher mobility, with international cooperation and academic exchanges severely hampered. In Russia, sanctions have markedly reduced international talent

exchanges in high-tech fields, intensifying brain drain and undermining social and economic development.^① Meanwhile, such constrained research exchanges have substantially impeded frontier algorithm R&D and the development of deep learning platforms in these countries. Although BRICS countries prioritize greater domestic investment in talent development in their AI strategic plans, the supply of high-end talent, in both quantity and quality, remains insufficient to meet the demands of AI development. A McKinsey report estimates that by 2030, China's domestically trained and overseas-recruited talent pool can supply only around 2 million AI professionals, leaving a shortfall of 4 million.^② Moreover, the vast differences in official languages and cultures among BRICS countries directly hamper the efficiency of cross-border exchanges and collaboration, constituting a hidden barrier to high-level AI talent cultivation and research cooperation. In joint training programs or research collaborations, although member countries are working to improve English proficiency

① Richard Portes, "Russia's Brain Drain Has Become Its Economy's Biggest Problem", London Business School, September 3, 2024, <https://www.london.edu/news/brain-drain-destroying-russian-future>.

② Wouter Maes and Alex Sawaya, "How Businesses Can Close China's AI Talent Gap", McKinsey & Company, May 5, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/how-businesses-can-close-chinas-ai-talent-gap>.

as a common medium of communication, uneven levels mean that many highly skilled professionals still lack sufficient intercultural communication competence, thereby increasing the difficulty of cross-national collaboration.

B. Divergent Strategic Orientations Among BRICS Members

The primary prerequisite for BRICS AI governance and cooperation is that each member has a clear sense of its own positioning and is willing to align with the overall strategic objectives of BRICS. In practice, however, countries such as Brazil, India, Russia, and South Africa are seeking to strengthen their leadership roles through different approaches, reflecting their divergent strategic goals and interests. Brazil and South Africa, for instance, highlight their identities as representatives of the "Global South" and "Africa"; India pursues a dual role as a "technology leader and independent innovator"; Russia prioritizes "multipolar governance and rule-projection"; while Indonesia and Ethiopia aim to broaden the

scope of South-South cooperation within "BRICS+". This divergence presents both a challenge and an opportunity, providing diverse entry points for varied cooperation. Future efforts will need to concentrate on areas of consensus within the BRICS framework to achieve resource complementarity and strategic synergy.

First, during its 2025 BRICS presidency, Brazil has actively played a dual role as "BRICS leader" and "Global South spokesperson", viewing the promotion of AI cooperation and South-South dialogue as a key means of securing a leading voice. Meanwhile, in its *Brazilian Artificial Intelligence Plan (PBI)* 2024-2028, the Brazilian government proposes leveraging the BRICS platform to attract greater participation from developing countries in AI infrastructure and application deployment, highlighting its leadership role in Global South technology cooperation. Domestically, Brazil positions itself as a proponent of green and inclusive AI, committed to using AI to bridge the urban-rural digital divide and advance sustainable development.^①

① Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovações, *Plano Brasileiro de Inteligência Artificial (PBI)* 2024-2028, Government of Brazil, August 7, 2024, https://www.gov.br/mcti/pt-br/acompanhe-o-mcti/noticias/2024/07/plano-brasileiro-de-ia-tera-supercomputador-e-investimento-de-r-23-bilhoes-em-quatro-anos/ia_para_o_bem_de_todos.pdf/view.

Second, India positions itself as a “dual engine of the Global South for technological innovation and self-reliant development”. Within the BRICS framework, India stresses the need both to draw on global technological resources and to strengthen its indigenous innovation capacity, thereby maintaining strategic autonomy in global AI competition. India’s “AI Mission” plan, in addition to large-scale GPU procurement and the establishment of AI centers of Excellence, sets the goal of “developing foundational models aligned with national standards” so as to reduce over-reliance on Western technology. India’s self-positioning has a dual character: within BRICS, it emphasizes South-South mutual assistance and technology sharing, while maintaining vigilance against dominant technological powers from either East or West, and seeking a leading voice in governance and rule-making.

Third, Russia’s positioning in AI capacity building is primarily that of a “rule-shaper in a multipolar world”. At the 2024 Kazan Summit, Russia proposed AI Ethics Guidelines and invited BRICS members to work together on a globally compatible AI governance framework. Russia positions itself as an exemplar of innovation balancing

technological autonomy with ethical norms, stressing that its regulatory experience in data localization and algorithmic explainability can serve as a reference for other emerging economies. At the same time, it views BRICS as a “South-South coordination” channel for circumventing Western technological restrictions, sharing domestically produced chips and training data platforms to strengthen technical mutual trust among members.

Fourth, South Africa positions itself within BRICS as “the champion of Africa’s voice”. Through the African Union platform, it bridges the AU with the BRICS mechanism, bringing issues such as agriculture, public health, and digital finance onto the BRICS agenda and seeking to translate African members’ shared concerns into tangible cooperation projects. The South African government emphasizes its role as a “demonstrator of inclusive technology adoption”, committed to leveraging AI to drive transformation in healthcare access, cross-border payments, and food security.

Fifth, although Indonesia and Ethiopia are not founding members of BRICS, they serve as bridges within the

“BRICS+” framework. Indonesia links the Southeast Asian market closely with BRICS cooperation through localized cloud infrastructure and AI talent development programs. Ethiopia, positioning itself as a “representative of Africa’s emerging economies”, contributes its experience in technology transfer and capacity building through the AI demonstration projects led by the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAII).^①

C. Divergent Legislative and Regulatory Approaches

AI technology development requires both regulatory safeguards and policy incentives. BRICS countries exhibit three typical models of AI legislation and regulation: “hard-law frameworks with soft-law guidance”, “legislation following pilot programs”, and “industry standards complemented by public participation”. While heterogeneous governance can address local needs, it also complicates multilateral cooperation and mutual recognition of

rules, creating an urgent need for stronger consensus-building mechanisms within BRICS and the exploration of cross-border regulatory coordination and enforcement assistance.

First, Brazil relies on its *General Personal Data Protection Act (LGPD)*, enacted in 2020, under which the National Data Protection Authority (ANPD) exercises end-to-end regulatory oversight. The ANPD has put in place a specialized audit and reporting framework for AI algorithms, which imposes mandatory reporting obligations for major algorithmic failures and issues guidance on de-identification practices and algorithmic transparency. Building on this hard-law foundation, Brazil has developed a dual-tier governance system combining hard-law constraints with soft-law flexibility through administrative instruments such as the *Regulations on AI Security Incident Reporting* and the *Data Compliance Guidelines for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)*.^②

Second, India’s legislative approach

^① Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute, “The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute and the Ethiopian Institute of Public Health Held a Signing Ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding to Work Together”, accessed May 20, 2026, <https://aii.et/the-ethiopian-artificial-intelligence-institute-and-the-ethiopian-institute-of-public-health-held-a-signing-ceremony-of-a-memorandum-of-understanding-to-work-together/>.

^② *Data Guidance*, “Brazil: ANPD Opens Public Consultation for AI and Automated Decisions Framework”, May 19, 2025, <https://www.dataguidance.com/news/brazil-anpd-opens-public-consultation-ai-and-automated>.

favors “soft law first, supplemented by hard law”. India’s *Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA)* of 2023 draws on the rights architecture of the EU GDPR, yet places greater emphasis on issuing non-binding guiding principles through the National Data Governance Framework Policy (NDGFP), affording considerable autonomy in areas such as algorithm auditing, impact assessments, and accountability mechanisms. The Indian government promotes a “regulatory sandbox” model, enabling AI enterprises to test new technologies in controlled settings before their subsequent incorporation into legal frameworks upon reaching maturity.

Third, Russia adopts a model of “statutory principles plus co-regulation”. In 2019 and 2020 respectively, Russia updated its *Strategy for the Development of the Information Society* and *National Strategy for the Development of AI through 2030*, and in 2024 amended the *Federal Law on Personal Data* (No. 152-FZ), mandating the establishment of national standards and industry norms. The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) led the development of the *Experimental Legal Regimes (ELR)*, also referred to as Russian Regulator

Sandboxes), which allow pilot implementation of innovative projects in designated sectors, followed by rapid nationwide roll-out once the regimes have been refined.

Fourth, South Africa combines the hard-law of the *Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)* with the *National Cloud and Data Policy* introduced in 2024, creating a parallel mechanism of “hard law plus white papers plus voluntary standards”. POPIA imposes strict requirements on sensitive data and automated decision-making, prohibiting model training without explicit consent. The industry white papers issued under the *National Cloud and Data Policy*, in turn, offer a range of optional practice standards and voluntary certification mechanisms, helping private enterprises strike a balance between global compliance and innovation in AI applications.

Fifth, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE are at the forefront of integrating hard and soft law. Saudi Arabia enacted the *Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL)* in 2021, issued the *Regulation on Personal Data Transfer Outside the Kingdom* in 2023, and proposed the draft *Global AI Hub Law* in 2025, which explores three models of cross-border data storage: “private hub”, “extended hub”, and

“virtual hub”. The UAE established hard-law protection for personal data through Federal Decree Law No. 45 of 2021, and in 2023 issued the *UAE Deepfake Guide* and the *Guidelines on Generative AI Applications*, applying soft constraints to emerging risks such as image synthesis and voice cloning.

Sixth, Egypt and Iran differ in their progress on hard-law development. Iran has yet to enact a comprehensive data protection law, but through the *Protection Bill* and the *National Data and Information Management Act* of 2022, it mandates data localization and compliance audits in critical industries. Egypt, for its part, builds on the *Personal Data Protection Law* (Law No. 151 of 2020), and in 2025 updated and published its *Egypt National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (Second Edition, 2025–2030)*, which articulates three strategic pillars: “legal safeguards plus industry standards plus public education”.

D. Divergent Dependence on Western Technology and Collaborative Relations

Core AI elements, such as computing power, algorithms and data, and cloud services, remain largely controlled by a few dominant Western tech companies

and platforms. BRICS countries differ in their degree of dependence and response strategies. In terms of Western technology dependence, BRICS countries can be divided into three categories: first, high dependence with risk mitigation (India, Saudi Arabia, UAE); second, seeking multilateral alternatives to reduce over-reliance (Brazil, South Africa, Egypt); third, passive decoupling with forced domestic self-sufficiency (Russia, Iran). These divergences reflect distinct readings of the external environment and present obstacles to joint procurement, shared computing power, and the co-development of alternative ecosystems within BRICS.

First, India adopts a “market-for-technology” strategy. The Indian government actively encourages AWS, Microsoft, and Google to establish local data centers and computing nodes in exchange for cooperative R&D and talent development. At the same time, it has incorporated data localization requirements for sensitive sectors into the *Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023*, guarding against potential Western sanctions and export restrictions on India’s technology ecosystem. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have signed bilateral agreements with the

United States, including the “AI Acceleration Partnership”, gaining advanced technology while accepting strict security standards and trade scrutiny. When negotiating high-end GPU imports and AI research platforms, Saudi sovereign wealth fund Public Investment Fund (PIF) and UAE AI investment firm MGX, jointly founded by the Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Company and AI company G42, incorporate preemptive clauses regarding US technology restriction policies to guard against future uncertainty.

Second, operating under the dual frameworks of the LGPD and the GDPR, Brazil must share information with the EU while sustaining its domestic AI innovation capacity. It promotes cross-border computing power and data connectivity through memoranda of understanding with European and US technology companies, while the LGPD imposes stringent conditions on cross-border data transfers, striking a balance between openness and regulatory sovereignty. Although South Africa maintains close research and talent exchanges with European and American universities and firms, its government favors incorporating South-South cooperation provisions into its national cloud and data

policies. This approach promotes the joint development of computing networks with cloud providers from other developing countries, thereby reducing reliance on Western hyperscalers, with priority access to sovereign data centers reserved for key projects. Egypt, by contrast, co-invests with Chinese enterprises in AI parks, exploring alternative supply chain models insulated from Western export controls.

Third, under Western sanctions, Iran has strengthened technological cooperation with BRICS countries. Through the *National Data and Information Management Act*, it has facilitated the joint development of AI models by local technology firms and Russian research teams. Russia, facing Western restrictions on advanced chips and cloud services, is accelerating import substitution. Since the escalation of sanctions in 2022, Russia’s access to high-end GPUs from NVIDIA, AMD, and other producers has been severely curtailed. This has prompted the state to invest billions of roubles in domestic AI chip projects, including the “Tensorion-1” and “Elbrus-8C”, and to work with Sberbank and Yandex to build national public cloud platforms, establishing a self-sufficient and sovereign

ecosystem as an “alternative to Western technology”.

E. BRICS AI Development Subject to Suppression by Some Western Countries

First, Western technology alliances are gradually taking shape with exclusivity towards BRICS countries. In January 2025, the United States issued the Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion, which divided countries around the world into three tiers. Among BRICS members, Russia, Iran, and China were placed in the most strictly controlled tier, with virtually all other BRICS members placed in a category subject to specific restrictions rather than classed as fully trusted. Justified on grounds of national security and values differences, these control measures substantially strengthen Western developed countries’ deep intervention in the global AI industry chain and seek to further confine key core components and high-end equipment within a narrow group of developed countries, challenging BRICS countries’ efforts to acquire cutting-edge technology and pursue independent innovation. Although the rule was subsequently revoked by the US Department

of Commerce in May 2025, the underlying thinking of computing power securitization and technological bloc polarization continues to have a negative impact on developing countries’ efforts to promote technological self-reliance and South-South cooperation. How BRICS countries can forge synergy to resist the technological monopoly created by developed countries through export control policies has thus become key to strengthening their own technological security and safeguarding their right to autonomous development.

Second, some Western developed countries effectively dominate most international standards organizations. According to an analysis report by the Atlantic Council, the United States holds at least 50% of voting rights in 11 of 39 international standards organizations, with its strongest presence in the most mature ones. This lends the United States powerful influence over international standard-setting.^① Moreover, its developed-country allies claim the “rest of the pie”. In most international standards organizations, German and British representation is typically slightly below that of the United

^① Giulia Neaher, David A. Bray, Julian Mueller-Kaler, and Benjamin Schatz, *Standardizing the Future: How Can the United States Navigate the Geopolitics of International Technology Standards?* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2021).

States, while Chinese representation is far lower. Compared to developed-country ally blocs, BRICS countries remain at a disadvantage in international rule-making and standard-setting, a moat that developed-country blocs will never relinquish. Competition over international institutions and discursive influence is set to become increasingly fierce.

Third, there is a risk of internal division within BRICS, making coordination more difficult. As a key BRICS member, China is a primary target of Western export controls. The United States has even pressured the UAE to abandon Chinese AI supply chains. In April 2024, Microsoft announced a USD 1.5 billion investment agreement with the UAE's G42, under which G42 would be allowed to use the computing resources of Microsoft's cloud computing platform, Azure. The deal's conclusion was fraught with twists and turns. The Biden administration required G42 to divest from Huawei and other Chinese equipment. "When it comes to emerging technology, you cannot be both in China's camp and our camp", said Gina Raimondo,

the commerce secretary, who traveled twice to the UAE. *The New York Times* commented, "The deal was largely orchestrated by the Biden administration to box out China as Washington and Beijing battle over who will exercise technological influence in the Persian Gulf region and beyond".^① A Microsoft executive, in an interview with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), suggested that even if the UAE were willing to reuse Huawei's AI infrastructure, it would find doing so increasingly difficult. Migration across different cloud services and AI infrastructure is costly. As long as the United States approves the UAE's use of Microsoft's AI chips and computing resources, it can "lock" the UAE into the US-led technology ecosystem.^②

F. Different Perceptions and Practices Regarding the UN and Regional Multilateral Governance Frameworks

In global and regional multilateral governance platforms, BRICS countries' participation priorities and cooperation approaches reflect different perceptions

and practices concerning the multilateral system. Their action models in multilateral frameworks can be summarized along three lines: first, promoting the "AI ethics and standards" agenda with the UN system at the core (Brazil, India, UAE, Egypt); second, using regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as platforms for demonstration projects and policy alignment (South Africa, Indonesia, Ethiopia); third, reinforcing "technology corridors and capacity building" through BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) regional cooperation as a supplement (Russia). While this multi-level, multi-track approach enhances flexibility, it also increases communication and coordination costs, calling for the establishment of cross-mechanism dialogue and coordination within BRICS, enabling the integration of resources and strategies from multiple sources.

First, Brazil tends to play a role in UN-led digital governance and AI ethics frameworks. It actively participates in the revision of the *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), bringing

its legislative experience, including LGPD, into UN discussions, and advocating at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the protection of developing countries' rights and interests in AI rule-making, stressing the equal importance of "digital sovereignty" and "global public goods". India values exerting influence in mechanisms such as the G20 and UNESCO. India proposed the "Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)" concept at the 2023 G20 Summit and co-launched a "Digital Skills and Employment" initiative with UNESCO; in 2024, it served as the reporting country in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, promoting developing countries' voice in AI standardization and cybersecurity. The UAE and Egypt are regular participants in the UN "AI for Good" Summit and the G20 Digital Economy Ministers' Meetings, and under the UN "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" framework, they incorporate AI application cases into global knowledge-sharing. For example, Dubai's pilot experience in public safety and smart cities has been recommended by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as a model digital governance demonstration project

^① Paul Mozur and David E. Sanger, "Microsoft Makes High-Stakes Play in Tech Cold War With Emirati A.I. Deal", *The New York Times*, April 16, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/technology/microsoft-g42-uae-ai.html>.

^② Gregory C. Allen, Georgia Adamson, Lennart Heim, and Sam Winter-Levy, "The United Arab Emirates' AI Ambitions: Key Implications for Maintaining U.S. AI Leadership", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), January 24, 2025, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/united-arab-emirates-ai-ambitions>.

for developing countries.

Second, South Africa operates in parallel through the AU and BRICS cooperation frameworks, committed to aligning the AU's African Digital Transformation (ADT) Strategy with BRICS technology cooperation platforms. South Africa's Department of Communications proposed an *AU-BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Roadmap* at the 2025 AU Digital Policy Forum, aiming to build AI demonstration projects and talent incubation mechanisms, promoting regional integration and cross-national capacity building. Indonesia and Ethiopia similarly promote the deeper engagement of ASEAN and the AU with the "BRICS+" mechanism. Indonesia proposes establishing a "Digital Connectivity Joint Working Group" within ASEAN and "BRICS+" cooperation frameworks, and advancing technical standard alignment through cross-regional seminars; Ethiopia participates in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) digital trade negotiations under the AU framework, proposing "data flow and security standards" to serve BRICS AI coordination.

Third, Russia prefers to conduct

technological cooperation within the BRICS and SCO frameworks. Russia proposed multiple "BRICS AI Ethics and Security Guidelines" at the 2024 BRICS Science and Technology Ministers' Joint Meeting and the Kazan Summit, and jointly carries out "Digital Silk Road" technology corridor construction with SCO members to strengthen "South-South + multilateral" synergy.

G. Insufficient BRICS Participation in Global AI Governance

On the one hand, BRICS countries remain underrepresented in international governance. Currently, global AI governance rules are primarily dominated by developed countries such as the United States and European countries. Through a series of international AI governance summits, they have advanced governance agendas aligned with their own demands. These summits include the 2023 AI Safety Summit held at Bletchley in the UK, the 2024 Seoul AI Safety Summit, and the 2025 AI Action Summit in France. Critics note that the global "arms race" around AI governance is not a metaphor but a real competition, with summit proliferation as its typical manifestation, leading to the "Balkanization"

of governance solutions.^① From another angle, however, this also attests to the success of developed countries in vying for a leading voice in global AI governance. In comparison, among BRICS countries, only China's World AI Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai commands comparable influence. More recently, India hosted its AI Impact Summit in February 2026. Yet, in the face of developed countries with formidable strength and dominant rule-making platforms, a large number of emerging economies and developing countries, including the BRICS members, are often left with no choice but to passively accept established norms and standards. The international dissemination of their proposed alternative solutions is also frequently limited.

On the other hand, AI governance approaches among BRICS countries remain uncoordinated. Although all BRICS countries recognize the significant impact of AI on the economy, politics, and security, they still hold divergent views on governance philosophy, regulatory models, and development paths, often

with competing priorities. The lack of rule coordination mechanisms in AI-related fields including data governance and ethical standards makes it difficult for BRICS countries to form common positions in international multilateral settings, thereby weakening their synergy and agenda-setting capacity in global AI governance rule-making.

Currently, although BRICS countries communicate through channels such as Leaders' Meetings and ministerial meetings, they still lack effective institutional arrangements on specific issues such as technical standards, data governance, and cybersecurity. In data protection and cross-border data flow policies, for instance, the BRICS cooperation mechanism has yet to put in place institutional arrangements comparable to those of the EU's GDPR or the APEC Cross-Border Privacy Rules (CBPR) system. Among BRICS members, China, Russia, India, and Brazil have adopted markedly different regulatory approaches, with substantial differences in

^① Raluca Csernatoni, "The AI Governance Arms Race: From Summit Pageantry to Progress?," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 7, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/the-ai-governance-arms-race-from-summit-pageantry-to-progress>; Laure de Roucy-Rochegonde, "Artificial Promises or Real Regulation? Inventing Global AI Governance", Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), February 3, 2025, <https://www.ifri.org/en/studies/artificial-promises-or-real-regulation-inventing-global-ai-governance>.

data localization requirements, regulatory bodies, and coordination methods. These differences across BRICS members in AI-related data, computing power, and algorithm rules and standards constrain AI governance cooperation. Insufficient internal coordination not only weakens BRICS countries' voice in international AI rule-making and standard-setting, but also makes it difficult for member states to forge unified external strategies in the face of external pressure, further compounding their under-representation in global governance.

H. Different Perceptions of Digital and AI Sovereignty

“Digital sovereignty” and “AI sovereignty” have become core concepts in global digital technology governance. Countries vary in how they interpret and apply these concepts, shaped by their security needs, industrial strategies, and conceptual preferences: some emphasize data regulation and cross-border flows (Brazil, India); some concentrate on underlying computing power and indigenous technology (Russia); some stress technological democratization and community participation (South Africa,

Ethiopia); and others innovatively integrate energy sovereignty with digital sovereignty (Saudi Arabia, UAE). Going forward, BRICS members need to achieve coordination on the multiple dimensions of digital sovereignty, so as to provide a policy and technical mutual recognition basis for cross-border data collaboration and computing power sharing.

First, under the LGPD framework, Brazil equates digital sovereignty with “data localization plus cross-border compliance”, safeguarding personal privacy while allowing data mutual recognition and circulation with the EU, the United States, and others under data protection agreements. Brazil combines “multilateral data sovereignty” with “global public goods”, advocating shared computing power and de-identified data exchange platforms at the BRICS and G20 levels.

Second, India emphasizes “computing power sovereignty”, proposing to achieve infrastructure self-sufficiency through national AI computing platforms and AI Centers of Excellence; meanwhile, its DPDPA incorporates algorithmic transparency and explainability into digital sovereignty, requiring “impact assessment reports” and “algorithmic specification documents” to

be filed locally, and imposing strict approval requirements on the cross-border access to local data services.

Third, Russia focuses on AI sovereignty understood as “technological autonomy combined with data protection”. Russia supports domestic AI chips and models to achieve closed-loop autonomy across the “hardware–software–algorithm” chain; at the data sovereignty level, the *Federal Law on Personal Data* requires all data in the public and sensitive domains to be stored domestically, and imposes VPN review, encrypted channels, and security audit mechanisms on external access.

Fourth, South Africa proposes the concept of “digital inclusive sovereignty”. The South African government advocates technological democratization, maintaining that digital sovereignty should encompass “citizens’ rights to information, participation and accountability in respect of data and algorithms”, and introduces “community data platforms” and “open-source mutual aid networks” in the National Data and Cloud Policy, establishing a tripartite co-governance model for AI sovereignty on public clouds, shared by government, the

private sector, and the community.

Fifth, Saudi Arabia and the UAE combine “energy-computing power” with digital sovereignty, exploring “green computing power sovereignty”. Saudi Arabia integrates renewable energy generation with the power supply for AI data centers, forming an “energy independence plus computing power autonomy” model; the UAE, building on ISO data security standards, proposes a “guest country plus virtual hub” data storage model, positioning itself as a leading hub for digital sovereignty oriented towards the international market.

Sixth, Indonesia and Ethiopia propose, respectively, the concepts of “digital democratic sovereignty” and “data empowerment sovereignty”. Indonesia, under its “Digital Indonesia” framework, emphasizes citizens’ shared ownership of network infrastructure and static data resources; Ethiopia, through the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAI) experimental platforms, promotes strategies of “local dataset priority” and “community-driven algorithms”, advancing both digital sovereignty and socially inclusive development.

V. Case Study: The India AI Impact Summit

From February 16 to 20, 2026, the India AI Impact Summit 2026 was held at Bharat Mandapam, the international convention center in New Delhi. As the fourth instalment in the global AI summit series and a follow-up to the 2025 Paris AI Action Summit, it was themed “Welfare for All, Happiness of All” and anchored in three core Pillars (Sutras): People, Planet, and Progress. According to Indian officials, the summit brought together over 20 heads of state, 60 ministers, and 500 global AI figures, with 200,000 participants from more than 100 countries engaging in discussions on AI welfare. The concurrent India AI

Impact Expo gathered over 300 exhibitors from 30 countries, featuring more than ten thematic pavilions.

A. Summit Overview

At the Leaders’ Plenary on 19 February, 2026, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address. Modi stated that AI stands at a “civilizational inflection point”, and belongs in the same league as the discovery of fire and the advent of the internet. He emphasized that AI is multiplying human capability many times over, yet if left unguided, it could become

a source of disruptive harm rather than a “solution”.

Modi proposed the “MANAV Vision” at the summit. “MANAV” means “human” in Sanskrit and Hindi. This acronym encapsulates India’s five core principles for global AI ethics and governance, designed to ensure that technology always remains under human control and serves the broader interests of society. Modi compared AI to a GPS system: it suggests the route, but the final decision of direction is ours. He warned that the “machine-centric” logic of the digital age must never override its “human-centric” counterpart, still less lead to the surrender of human command over technology.

Modi underscored the significance of technological democratization and global equity, and further elaborated on the underlying connotations of the summit theme, “Welfare for All, Happiness of All”. He criticized the stance taken by certain countries and corporations that treat AI as a strategic asset to be developed behind closed doors, arguing instead that AI must be shared as a “global public good”. In response to the worsening problem

of deepfakes and disinformation, Modi issued an urgent appeal. He proposed the establishment of unified global standards for authenticity labels and watermarking, and called on AI platforms to adopt a “glass box” rather than “black box” approach to render safety rules transparent and verifiable. Such transparency, he argued, is not merely a technical requirement but the bedrock of public trust in AI.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Electronics and Information Technology of India, laid out the detailed implementation framework for India’s AI strategy, centred on computational sovereignty and the democratization of AI infrastructure. Minister Vaishnaw noted that AI is ushering in the fifth industrial revolution, and that India must secure a leadership position by building a “frugal, sovereign and scalable” ecosystem. Vaishnaw announced that India is rolling out an ambitious GPU expansion program. Building on the existing 38,000 GPUs, the government will add a further 20,000 GPUs via the “IndiaAI Compute Portal”, bringing a total to 58,000. The initiative aims to remove the financial barriers that startups, research institutions and students face in accessing

state-of-the-art computing power.^① This strategy of democratizing compute access encapsulates India’s governance logic: breaking the monopoly over computing resources through public investment. Vaishnaw stressed that while advanced AI infrastructure in many countries remains highly concentrated in the hands of a few major corporations, India is building an alternative model, backed by a substantial national investment of approximately 1 trillion rupees, to transform AI into a tool for public empowerment.

Minister Vaishnaw, on behalf of the Government of India, launched the *New Delhi Frontier AI Commitments* during the summit. The commitments take the form of a voluntary framework signed by Google, OpenAI, Microsoft, Anthropic, and leading domestic AI enterprises in India. They rest on two core pillars. First, participating companies commit to publishing statistical insights based on anonymized and aggregated data. This data will enable governments to better understand the real-world impact of AI on employment trends, skill demands, and labor markets, and

support evidence-based policy-making. Second, multilingual and cross-cultural evaluation. In light of the complex linguistic realities of Global South countries, signatories commit to strengthening AI evaluation for underrepresented languages, including India’s 22 scheduled languages. Vaishnaw noted that AI must demonstrate high accuracy and cultural sensitivity across diverse linguistic and social contexts, otherwise it risks deepening existing social divides.

B. The Global South’s Leading Voice in AI Governance Is Rising

The 2026 India “AI Impact Summit” reflected the Global South’s growing sense of agency in the AI governance agenda, as demonstrated in its agenda-setting, multilateral cooperation, and discursive framework. In terms of agenda-setting, the summit’s pre-events featured multiple sessions centred on the Global South, including “AI for Global South Countries: Charting the Roadmap for the Next Decade”, “AI in the Global South: DPI as a Model for AI Governance”, and “Ethical

and Responsible AI Leadership for the Global South”. These sessions focused on AI deployment in concrete scenarios such as education, healthcare, and labor in developing countries, alongside capacity-building in digital infrastructure. This agenda built on the Paris AI Action Summit, marking a shift from the safety-first priorities of the Bletchley Park and Seoul summits towards innovation and real-world application.

In terms of multilateral cooperation, collaboration among Global South countries grew stronger. The image of Brazilian President Lula and Prime Minister Modi entering the venue together served as a powerful symbol of strategic synergy between major Global South powers. Far more than a diplomatic gesture, this sent an unmistakable political signal of deepening South-South cooperation on AI governance. In his address, President Lula emphasized that AI development must not replicate the existing structural imbalances of the global economy. Instead, it should serve as a policy instrument for redressing inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. Building on Brazil’s 2024 G20 presidency, the country is strengthening coordination with India to ensure that the Global South secures

a stronger voice in the multilateral AI agenda, particularly in critical areas such as computing power sharing, open-source collaboration, and technology transfer. The Brazilian delegation, comprising dozens of ministers and corporate executives, signaled Brazil’s intent to deepen cooperation with India in AI applications for agriculture, mineral resource governance, and technical standard-setting. Overall, this interaction underscored the growing role of South-South cooperation in shaping the future technological order.

Within the discursive framework, concepts such as the “democratization of AI”, “Global South leadership”, and a “third way” emerged as the defining themes of the summit. As the host nation, India pinned high hopes on the event, aiming to establish it as “one of the most important summits for the Global South”. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the summit as the “first” global AI summit hosted by a Global South country, signaling India’s ambition to lead the Global South and establish itself as a “global hub for AI innovation and application”. India’s official communications also branded the event as “the Global South’s first large-scale AI summit”, framing it as a milestone in the

^① “India to More Than Double Its GPU Capacity in Six Months, Says IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at AI Summit”, *The Times of India*, February 17, 2026, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/technology/tech-news/india-to-more-than-double-its-gpu-capacity-in-six-months-says-it-minister-ashwini-vaishnaw-at-ai-summit/articleshow/128460540.cms>.

country's drive to secure a leading voice in global AI governance.

C. A Development-First Path Is Taking Shape

Another key trend highlighted at the India AI Impact Summit is the gradual emergence of a “development-first” AI approach, evident in both strategic alignment and institutional design. At the strategic level, India has made a strategic shift from developing sovereign large models to application-oriented small models. In this context, Indian entrepreneur Nandan Nilekani, the architect of India's Aadhaar national identity system and Unified Payments Interface (UPI), proposed the “appliance theory”: AI development is not about building the largest “power generator”, but about leveraging existing computing power to develop the “appliances” best suited to national needs. Ashwini Vaishnaw told Fortune India: “The return on investment does not come from building a super-large model; the vast majority of use cases can be served with appropriately sized models”.

This perspective indicates that the development-first path prioritizes real-world deployment over sheer scale.^①

At the institutional level, the computing resource pool model under the IndiaAI Mission provides critical structural support for a “development-first” pathway. Reports indicate that the Indian government has established a computing resource pool of approximately 18,000 GPUs using public funds; while these resources are operated by private enterprises, the government retains authority over allocation. This mechanism significantly lowers entry barriers for startups and research institutions, while ensuring public revenue returns through equity participation. By decoupling infrastructure ownership from access control, this model leaves hardware ownership and operational responsibilities to domestic private firms, while the government provides funding and manages resource distribution. This approach not only enhances domestic capacity building but also serves as a replicable institutional blueprint for other Global South countries. As highlighted by the Carnegie Endowment

^① “India's AI Third Track: From Scale to Substance”, *Eurasia Review*, February 26, 2026, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/26022026-indias-ai-third-track-from-scale-to-substance-oped/>.

report, access to computing power remains one of the largest structural constraints on AI development in the Global South, rendering the governance design of computing resources a vital component of any development-first strategy.^①

D. The AI Power Structure Continues to Constrain the Development of the Global South

Behind the meta-narrative of the 2026 India AI Impact Summit, international geopolitical observers and prominent think tanks have expressed skepticism regarding the feasibility of India's ambition to establish itself as the “leader of AI in the Global South”. Viewed through the lens of global AI governance, New Delhi's aspirations confront three insurmountable structural contradictions:

First is the paradox between “strategic autonomy” and “technological dependence”. The fundamentally monopolistic and exploitative power asymmetry inherent in the current AI market remains largely unacknowledged. While India endeavors to

forgo a collective front with fellow Southern nations to champion “strategic autonomy” in the AI domain, the sheer imbalance of technological capabilities means such efforts will likely culminate in Western tech giants aggressively capturing developing markets at minimal cost. Second is the legitimacy gap between an “inclusive narrative” and “stringent domestic control”. Although Indian officials publicise idealistic visions such as “AI for Good” and “welfare of all”, imperatives of domestic politics and national security, particularly counter-terrorism mandates, suggest that India will inevitably grapple with algorithmic bias and the infringement of minority rights during its practical AI implementation. Finally, lacking technological dominance, these diplomatic overtures risk devolving into mere empty talk. Despite the summit's lofty ambitions, a genuinely binding international cooperation mechanism has yet to materialize. Given that the Global South broadly lacks core technological foundations, diplomatic summits alone are structurally incapable of dismantling the entrenched international division of labor, where “the West dictates the underlying rules, and the

^① Lakshmee Sharma and Jane Munga, “South-South AI Collaboration: Advancing Practical Pathways”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 13, 2026, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/02/south-south-ai-collaboration-advancing-practical-pathways>.

South merely supplies the data”.

The 2026 India AI Impact Summit serves as a multi-faceted prism reflecting the complex reality of the global AI ecosystem. While it successfully convened leading AI computing resources and intellectual talent from around the world, the event ultimately fell short of forging the unified technological vision or robust cooperative consensus anticipated by Indian officials. The deep-seated strategic divergences and cautious pragmatism exhibited by tech giants at the summit underscore a stark reality: the global community still conspicuously lacks an actionable governance

framework capable of mitigating the ethical, security, and employment shocks triggered by the current technological explosion. Furthermore, a grand display of home-field diplomacy cannot obscure the fundamental deficit of underlying core technologies plaguing the Global South. For India and the broader developing world, escaping technological dependence within the emerging AI power structure, while simultaneously achieving the dual imperatives of development and security, demands a steady, long-term commitment to building solid indigenous technological foundations and implementing pragmatic domestic governance.

VI. Recommendations for Advancing BRICS Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence

Effective BRICS AI governance cooperation requires making better use of existing resource platforms among member states, particularly the international development cooperation strategies represented by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which can play an important role in bridging the AI infrastructure gap. Furthermore, more streamlined, well-structured, and multidimensional AI cooperation mechanisms need to be established within BRICS, so as to jointly enable BRICS countries to voice a “BRICS position” in international governance arenas and work together to remove obstacles to the inclusive development of AI.

A. Governance Level

First, establish a BRICS AI strategic dialogue and mutual trust mechanism.

The development of AI technology depends heavily on strategic mutual trust and institutional communication among members. At present, BRICS countries face multiple obstacles to collaboration, including divergent expectations regarding strategic positioning, varying degrees of dependence on Western technology, and the absence of a unified understanding of the potential risks posed by AI systems. Building broad and structurally robust dialogue and mutual trust mechanisms is therefore foundational to AI technology cooperation.

The first is to establish a high-level BRICS AI governance dialogue platform, with clearly defined cooperation milestones and pathway arrangements to avoid empty talk. A “BRICS AI Strategic Dialogue Committee” could be established under

the existing BRICS standing mechanisms, conducting regular exchanges on governance concepts, standards and rules, data flows, and other priority issues; at the same time, regular exchange platforms such as a “BRICS AI Technology Cooperation Platform” and a “Young Tech Envoy program” should be promoted to strengthen the robustness of communication channels. These channels would provide a space for members to share experiences, promoting the formation of common rule frameworks and narrowing the regulatory gaps arising from institutional differences.

The second is to improve specific working procedures and coordination mechanisms among BRICS countries. BRICS countries should establish permanent working groups, information-sharing platforms, and expert exchange networks in AI governance, strengthening the multi-track coordination role of member state think tanks and research institutions. These efforts will help members complement each other’s experience at the rule-making and implementation levels, forge a unified governance approach to bridge regulatory gaps, reduce policy communication costs, and improve the efficiency of discussions on AI governance

among BRICS members.

The third is to promote joint research on mutually recognized standards and ethical norms. BRICS countries should organize joint research on international rules and ethical guidelines covering key domains such as safe and trustworthy AI systems, including data governance, algorithms, computing power, and talent training. By focusing on breakthrough priority issues such as cross-border data flows, deepfakes, and the risks of AI losing control, members can form a consistent normative system. On this basis, the domestic and international standards of BRICS members can be gradually aligned to achieve the mutual recognition of rules and reduce institutional friction.

The fourth is to strengthen AI system security cooperation and build collaborative risk governance mechanisms. Considering that countries have varying governance capacities in addressing issues such as training data bias, algorithmic discrimination, and system vulnerability in AI systems, BRICS countries should work towards the *BRICS Guidelines for AI Security Assessment and Certification* to jointly develop cross-border risk identification

tools and emergency response platforms. By integrating Russia’s data localization control, South Africa’s government cloud audit framework, and China’s frontier practices in AI governance standards, a “BRICS AI System Security Cooperation Network” should be established to provide capacity-building support to members.

Second, improve the BRICS AI regulatory and data coordination framework. BRICS countries exhibit significant differences in legal pathways and technical capabilities for AI regulation and data governance, bringing both localized adaptation advantages and cross-border cooperation obstacles. Regulatory governance and cross-border data mechanisms should be separated into two tiers, advancing by category and coordinating in a complementary manner. In terms of regulation, an inclusive and unified regulatory framework should be constructed. Given the differing stages of regulatory legislation, uneven enforcement resources, and insufficient technical support capabilities across BRICS members in AI regulation, countries are encouraged to share regulatory lists, enforcement cases, and key technical standards.

The first is to unify AI algorithm auditing and risk assessment frameworks, establishing technical guidelines mutually recognized by member states. Leveraging China’s technical advantages in fields such as algorithmic explainability assessment, the group can formulate corresponding compliance guidelines covering high-risk algorithm filing and system bias correction, thereby gradually narrowing regulatory disparities in high-risk scenarios among members.

The second is to strengthen collaborative regulatory capacity-building by establishing an AI governance training platform and facilitating cross-border exchanges of regulatory personnel. Building upon China-hosted AI capacity-building seminars, member states can develop inter-ministerial joint training mechanisms and regularly host the “BRICS AI Governance Forum” to foster a high-level network of regulatory talent.

The third is to address cross-border data mechanisms. Given that BRICS countries exhibit clear divergences in legislation and regulatory practices, it is essential to promote mutual recognition of rules and process coordination, aiming

for a unified, classified and tiered review mechanism for cross-border data. On the basis of consultation, members should propose the *BRICS Cross-Border Data Flow Guidelines*, supported by security assessment and compliance processes, to facilitate policy alignment and standard integration, ultimately reducing institutional compliance costs for enterprises.

The fourth is to build a BRICS multilateral data compliance mechanism by establishing the BRICS Data Compliance Mutual Recognition Platform to promote international interoperability across data review, assessment processes, and compliance documentation. In addition, developing a repository of automated compliance detection tools will support members in strengthening their capacities to review enterprise data flows, while advancing the construction of infrastructure for cross-border transactions of data elements. Focusing on three categories of data assets, namely government, public, and commercial data, members should construct security sandboxes and pilot zones to encourage early implementation in scenarios such as digital health, intelligent manufacturing,

and cross-border e-commerce, gradually shaping a BRICS common market for data flows.

B. Industry Level

Firstly, advance the construction of a BRICS computing power infrastructure cooperation network. Computing power is the core foundation of the AI industry and a critical cornerstone for building interconnectivity among BRICS countries. Such bottlenecks as significant gaps in technical capabilities, vaguely defined demand, and cooperation pathways that have yet to yield tangible results mean that establishing a practically feasible, demand-oriented cooperation system is a matter of urgency.

The first is to develop a coordinated mechanism for computing power cooperation. Promote the formulation of the BRICS Computing Power Infrastructure Coordinated Development Plan to clarify each country's computational development stage and cooperation priorities. In alignment with relevant strategic blueprints, "BRICS computing nodes" can be selectively deployed in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America,

backed by universal standards, technical access protocols, and energy consumption benchmarks.

The second is to focus on demand-matching and scenario integration to avoid the underutilization of computing resources. Coordinated by the BRICS Institute of Future Networks, a "Computing Power Supply-Demand Matching Platform" would allow member institutions to submit demand-side projects and data resources around practical AI application scenarios, including agriculture, finance, and urban governance, driving supply-side resource scheduling through a "computing services order" model and significantly strengthening the platform's industrial orientation.

The third is to promote the development of green computing power. Relying on South Africa, Brazil, and other countries with abundant renewable energy resources, BRICS can construct integrated wind-solar-storage-computing facilities, promote low-carbon, energy-saving computational development models, and set a prime example for green intelligent infrastructure cooperation across the Global South.

Secondly, implement the BRICS Joint AI Talent Cultivation program. To achieve this, existing talent cultivation experiences among countries need to be integrated into a well-coordinated system covering basic education, professional skills, and advanced scientific research. Cross-regional mobility and capability enhancement of BRICS AI talent can be promoted through mechanism building, resource sharing, and ecosystem optimization.

The first is to promote the establishment of a joint training framework encompassing basic education, vocational training, and high-end scientific research. Under the "BRICS Full-Cycle AI Education Coordination Mechanism", popular courses would be launched at the primary and secondary levels, cross-national research laboratories would be jointly established at universities, and enterprise-level practical training cooperation projects would be facilitated.

The second is to advance the establishment of a BRICS multilateral talent training mechanism, modelled on China's existing AI capacity-building seminars. This mechanism would systematically offer AI governance and application capability

training to young officials, technical experts, and policymakers from Global South countries, thereby amplifying BRICS' collective voice and extending its influence on global rule-making.

The third is to build an ecosystem for AI talent development. Establish the "BRICS AI Youth Exchange Platform" to encourage young tech professionals to engage in short-term visits, project incubation, and entrepreneurial competitions. The platform should be complemented by the "AI Youth Scholarship" and the "BRICS Entrepreneurship Incubation Fund", creating an integrated mechanism that links talent mobility, venture incubation, and platform construction. Regular BRICS AI Youth Summits should be hosted to facilitate intellectual exchanges and the cross-fertilization of ideas, fostering an open and innovative cultural atmosphere.

Thirdly, build a cooperation mechanism for BRICS AI investment and financing platforms. AI industry development depends on long-term, stable financial support. To foster sustainable cooperation among BRICS countries in this domain, it is essential to establish a well-coordinated, orderly, and multi-functional investment

and financing cooperation mechanism. By pooling members' mature practices in fund establishment, policy support, and market cultivation, BRICS can create synergies to alleviate practical bottlenecks such as capital matchmaking difficulties and high investment risks.

The first is to establish a multi-tiered joint fund system to create a full-cycle financial network covering early-stage investment, technology R&D, and industrial commercialization. BRICS nations are well placed to build a joint financial platform spanning business incubation, technology transfer, and the commercialization of research findings, drawing on Saudi Arabia's experience with Silicon Valley venture capital and integrating members' existing special funds and investment channels into a cross-border venture capital alliance. Furthermore, members should explore the establishment of a "BRICS Industrial Investment Alliance". The alliance would serve as a platform for cross-border project evaluation and joint investment in key sectors, including healthcare and agricultural development, accelerating the growth of enterprises with promising prospects and mature deployment conditions.

The second is to collaboratively optimize the investment and financing policy environment by aligning AI-related investment standards and promoting regulatory convergence among BRICS. Policy communication regarding taxation, subsidies, approval processes, and supervision should be enhanced to lower the barriers to cross-border investment. The group could explore a joint credit guarantee mechanism, where policy-based financial institutions from member states contribute to a risk mitigation platform, leveraging the joint fund experience between South Africa and the European Union to provide robust support for member enterprises in expanding globally and attracting inbound foreign investment.

The third is to co-create a diversified investment and financing ecosystem. Through resource sharing, international cooperation, and market cultivation, BRICS will attract global capital into its AI industry, enhancing the vitality of the financial ecosystem. The framework will support the development of homegrown investment institutions within member states, guiding local capital into the AI sector and incubating more indigenous investment and financing platforms, including the India AI

Industry Alliance, enhancing the capacity for autonomous capital operation within the region.

Fourthly, launch joint demonstration projects in key sectors. Advancing joint demonstration projects in key sectors serves as a pivotal lever for BRICS countries to deepen practical cooperation and promote the tangible implementation of cooperation outcomes. Building on the existing strengths and specific needs of each member, the group should strengthen resource coordination, unified standards, and linkage mechanisms to develop a batch of operable and replicable demonstration projects, generating a catalytic effect.

The first is to establish a cross-sector joint demonstration mechanism. Focusing on sectors vital to public well-being, including agriculture, healthcare, finance, and energy, members should integrate key project resources to carry out cross-sector demonstration cooperation through collaborative design, complementary strengths, and experience sharing. To this end, BRICS countries may jointly establish a "Demonstration Project List", compiling China's exemplary practices in areas such as "Digital Countryside Construction"

and “Internet Plus Healthcare”, and aligning them with South Africa’s needs in primary healthcare services and India’s requirements for smallholder farmer data collection, so as to facilitate targeted project matchmaking.

The second is to promote the mutual recognition and adaptation of standards and rules. To enhance project replicability, technical standards and data interfaces in key links should be aligned. A BRICS Coordination Mechanism for Digital Technical Standards should be established as soon as possible to promote consensus-building among member states on the regulatory frameworks for related hardware and software products, security certifications, and other technical rules. Priority should be given to aligning rules in specific application scenarios, such as telemedicine, agricultural traceability, and financial risk control. China is encouraged to share its existing medical device interconnection standards and e-government interface specifications with BRICS partners to enhance system compatibility and policy coherence.

The third is to strengthen alignment with multilateral mechanisms to expand

the impact of demonstration projects. BRICS countries can coordinate actions within platforms such as the UN, AU, and ASEAN to integrate successful cases into multilateral development agendas. A BRICS Multilateral Development Coordination Platform should be established at the earliest opportunity to pool and coordinate member positions and resources for digital capacity building and infrastructure connectivity. For instance, China’s Global Development Initiative (GDI) can be in line with the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa, promoted by South Africa, forming policy synergy that covers a broader range of developing economies and further enhances the diffusion effects of demonstration projects.

Fifthly, differentiated cooperation frameworks should be constructed to resolve divergences, based on countries’ varying degrees of dependence on Western technology and their collaborative relationships. Cooperation should be tiered according to these dependence levels, with tailored platforms and models being established and implemented accordingly. Middle Eastern countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia rely heavily on Western technology for computing power

infrastructure and AI chips. These countries should be allowed to maintain appropriate channels for third-party cooperation, while being encouraged to strengthen their BRICS collaboration in non-sensitive domains. Russia and Iran, having established autonomous substitution systems in certain critical technology fields, should be encouraged toward deeper integration and utilization of their data and algorithm resources for self-reliant development. South Africa and Egypt, which are transitioning from technology importation to localized cultivation, should be provided with policy consultation and pilot projects to gradually build local technology ecosystems.

C. International Level

Firstly, the potential of international development cooperation strategies, notably the BRI, should be further leveraged to bridge gaps in AI infrastructure and industrial development among BRICS countries. The first is to promote infrastructure connectivity. Under existing multilateral communication mechanisms, BRICS members should coordinate their AI infrastructure development plans and strategic goals, establish unified

infrastructure construction standards and policies, and create long-term, stable cooperation frameworks to achieve resource sharing and complementary strengths. The BRI provides a platform for building efficient connectivity networks among BRICS countries. China’s strengths in AI infrastructure development should be further leveraged. When selecting target countries for Chinese enterprises “going global”, priority should be given to key regional projects in BRICS member countries, helping to narrow regional gaps arising from weak electricity supply, network coverage, and underdeveloped digital foundations through the joint construction of data centers and high-speed broadband communication infrastructure.

The second is to promote cross-border industrial synergy and technology transfer. As AI cooperation among BRICS members advances rapidly, the resource integration function of relevant platforms should be further leveraged to build more AI project cooperation and market demand matchmaking platforms among BRICS countries, facilitating precise alignment between industry and academia and driving technology transfer and industrial cooperation. Furthermore, BRICS countries

can leverage the BRI to establish cross-border industrial parks and cooperation platforms, facilitating the deployment and scaling of advanced AI technologies and solutions. The variations in technology R&D and industrial application across BRICS members can be transformed into complementary strengths, with technologically advanced countries providing critical core technology support to others, promoting coordinated development of upstream and downstream supply chains, and gradually narrowing gaps in infrastructure and industrial capacity.

The third is to strengthen financing support for BRICS infrastructure development and industrial growth. BRICS countries should capitalize on resource synergies to provide stable funding for member states' infrastructure projects. They should also guide enterprises and research institutions to participate in the commercialization of scientific achievements, fostering a virtuous cycle in BRICS AI industrial development and driving collective technological upgrading. Specifically, to tackle challenges such as unstable power supplies and low network penetration in certain countries, BRICS members can utilize the New Development

Bank (NDB) and relevant financial institutions. By aligning with BRI projects, they can introduce external funding and technical expertise, innovate financial instruments, lower financing costs, and elevate overall digital infrastructure, thereby providing a solid foundation for AI applications across BRICS nations.

Secondly, coordinate BRICS efforts to jointly counteract developed countries' suppression of AI inclusivity and technological equity. The first is to enhance independent AI innovation and industrial upgrading, increase self-funded R&D investment, accelerate breakthroughs in core technologies, and ensure self-reliance and control over industry chains. By integrating member countries' competitive resources, BRICS should establish transnational R&D cooperation platforms to build synergy in technological innovation, reduce dependence on external technology, and fundamentally weaken the impact of external constraints. BRICS countries should join forces in AI chip design and manufacturing, algorithm model R&D and open-source sharing, privacy-preserving computing and other data security technologies, as well as computing power platforms and data center construction,

enhancing their overall technological competitiveness and global industrial influence.

The second is to effectively counter developed countries' suppression of global inclusive development and technological equity. To this end, BRICS countries should build new mechanisms by establishing policy and industrial coordination dialogue platforms. BRICS members should reach a consensus on technology export controls, international rule-making, and other issues, jointly formulate countermeasures, and eliminate divergences among member states in policies, technology cooperation, and participation in international standards. On the basis of strengthened internal policy synergy, member states should deepen cooperation with the broader Global South to jointly strive for fair and inclusive technical rules in the international governance system, enhancing BRICS countries' overall response capacity and setting a new benchmark for global digital governance.

Thirdly, accelerate BRICS cooperation in global AI governance and articulate a unified BRICS stance in international governance arenas. The first aspect is

to strengthen influence within existing international multilateral organizations. BRICS countries should further clarify the critical role of the UN in multilateral governance, while actively seeking to participate, in the name of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, in the activities of international standard-setting bodies, notably the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Efforts should also be intensified to encourage and support research institutions and technical experts from BRICS member states to participate in and organize conferences held by professional societies such as the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), publishing and exchanging research findings. In particular, by leveraging platforms like the ISO Annual Meeting and Global AI Dialogue, BRICS countries can collectively articulate the demands of emerging market countries regarding technical standards and ethical norms, bringing inclusiveness and diversified perspectives to global governance.

The second aspect is to jointly formulate global governance initiatives

and standards. BRICS countries should accelerate the joint formulation of global governance initiatives and international standards in areas such as AI safety, ethics, and data governance, enhancing their influence in global AI governance and securing equitable development opportunities for emerging market countries in the intelligent era. BRICS

countries should strengthen their representation in international standard-setting and rule-making, project a cohesive image in global governance fora, and enhance their overall competitiveness and institutional influence, contributing constructive input to the global AI governance framework and articulating a distinct BRICS perspective.



