

BRICS+ Boosts Influence of Global South

Voice of the World

By GONG Qian & WANG Manxi

With Indonesia becoming a member of BRICS recently, the growing influence of the Global South has gained momentum.

Indonesia's Foreign Ministry said joining the cooperation mechanism is a strategic move to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries under the principles of equality, mutual respect and sustainable development.

As a country with a diverse and fast-growing economy, Indonesia will contribute to the BRICS agenda, including strengthening economic resilience, technical cooperation, and sustainable development. It will also contribute to addressing global challenges such as climate change, food security and public health.

China's Foreign Ministry said Indonesia, a large developing country and an important force in the Global South, recognizes the BRICS spirit and participates in the "BRICS+" cooperation.

China has been the leading proponent of expanding BRICS to BRICS+ to make it more representative of the developing world and give it a stronger voice on the global stage, according to the East Asia Forum. Indonesia's formal accession to BRICS is in line with the com-



The BRICS New Development Bank is headquartered in Shanghai, supporting infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies and developing countries. (PHOTO: VCG)

mon interests of BRICS countries and the Global South, and will contribute to the development of the BRICS.

"BRICS has become one of the most important organizations on Earth, bringing together nations with massive populations, enormous economies, and incredible productive capacities," news outlet Geopolitical Economy Report said.

On January 1, 2024, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia became new members of BRICS. In November 2024, after the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, nine countries — Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Uganda — were designated as BRICS partners. According to Russian news agency TASS, more than 20 countries have showed

their interest in joining BRICS.

An emerging priority for BRICS is to serve as a platform where developing countries can express their concerns and interests. The group advocates for the use of local currencies in trade among its members, especially in trade with China, as well as supporting rules-based, open and transparent global trade. The expansion of its membership clearly aligns with this goal, East Asia Forum said.

As an international organization composed of emerging market countries, BRICS aims to promote dialogue and cooperation and safeguard the common interests of emerging market economies and developing countries.

The BRICS economies account for an estimated 37.3 percent of global GDP based on purchasing power parity, according to a report by the World Economic Forum. In the manufacturing sector, BRICS countries account for over 40 percent of the world's total output, playing an indispensable role in the global supply chain. In terms of food production, they produce 42 percent of the world's wheat, 52 percent of rice, and 46 percent of soybeans, serving as a pillar of global food security.

BRICS+ acts as the voice of the Global South in multilateral forums. The expansion of BRICS+ stands to become a boon for the global economy, according to an article published in the *BRICS Journal of Economics*.

China-Africa Historical Bond Drives Development

Comment

By LU Zijian

China and Africa have a long history of mutually beneficial cooperation based on equality and respect, and 2025 has ushered in a new chapter for furthering joint development with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visiting four African countries at the start of the year.

Wang's Africa tour marks the 35th year that Chinese foreign ministers have made the continent their first overseas destination at the start of the year. Eric Orlander, co-founder of the China-Global South Project told Reuters that the decision on which countries to go to each year rarely follows any external logic, but rather resonates in Africa as a reminder of China's consistent commitment to the continent.

In a press briefing after meeting with President of the Republic of the

Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso in Brazzaville, Wang highlighted the important role of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in promoting Africa's development and improving the well-being of African people.

Over the past three years, more than one million jobs have been created in Africa thanks to the thriving China-Africa cooperation. The livelihood projects implemented in Africa such as those related to food security, water supply, and education, have benefited the people of many African countries, Wang said.

According to a report released by the National Development and Reform Commission and other departments in August 2024, Chinese enterprises participated in the construction and upgrade of over 10,000 km of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, 1,000 bridges, 100 ports and 66,000 km of power transmission and distribution lines in Africa.

China also helped build more than 130 hospitals and clinics in Africa, sent medical teams to 45 African countries and established cooperation with 46 African hospitals, which facilitates the improvement of local medical and healthcare level.

Data from China's General Administration of Customs showed that the total export and import value of China to Africa in the first 11 months of 2024 reached

266.8 billion USD, an increase of 3.5 percent year on year, demonstrating the strong trade vitality and resilience between China and Africa.

Starting from December 1, 2024, China gave all the least developed countries (LDCs) with which it has diplomatic relations, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, including 33 countries in Africa, another step to boost trade.

"China has become central to Africa's policy, as an actor and an inspiration," Hannah Ryder, founder of Development Reimagined, an African-owned consultancy, told Reuters.

Meanwhile, Cliff Mboya, a research fellow at the Ghana-based Afro-Sino Center of International Relations, told Deutsche Welle that, "Africa's long-term development plans are being put into consideration. We are seeing China aligning with the Agenda 2063, proposed by the African Union, for example."

As co-chairs of FOCAC, China and the Republic of the Congo have developed a "timetable" and "roadmap" for the development of the forum over the next three years, Wang noted, adding that China is ready to work with African countries to further boost the well-established credentials of FOCAC, making their contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

older films. Their advancements ensure that restored films meet modern 4K standards, achieving greater clarity and natural visual effects. Updates to AI algorithms have reduced restoration time by nearly threefold, with a two-hour film now requiring just five hours of processing instead of 18.

The project highlights the role of AI in cultural preservation, setting a precedent for its application in restoring and safeguarding cinematic heritage. Through this initiative, classic Hong Kong films are made accessible to contemporary audiences with enhanced visual fidelity.



A train of the Lagos Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) Blue Line pulling in the Marina Station in Lagos, Nigeria. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

AI Gives Classic Films New Lease of Life

AI Ripples

By LIN Yuchen

The 4K version of *The Swordsman* recently made its screening debut at the China Film Archive (the only national organization of film heritage preservation), commemorating the centenary of the birth of renowned novelist Louis Cha (Jin-Yong) and the 20th anniversary of the passing of famous composer James Wong.

The debut is a part of the Classic

Hong Kong Film Restoration Project. This initiative aims to preserve the legacy of Hong Kong cinema, once referred to as the "Hollywood of the East."

A collaboration between the China Film Archive, Douyin, and Volcengine (cloud service of Chinese tech company ByteDance), the project was launched in August 2023 to address the deterioration of film reels caused by aging. Over the past year, 100 films have been restored in 4K, with 90 utilizing AI-driven techniques and 10 combining AI with manual restoration.

AI technology has proven instru-

mental in streamlining the restoration process. Wang Zheng, a restoration specialist at the China Film Archive, explained that traditional methods, which involved manually removing scratches and stains, were both time-consuming and labor-intensive. AI now automates these repetitive tasks, significantly increasing efficiency. Intelligent frame interpolation technology, for example, enhances the fluidity of action sequences by doubling the frame rate.

Engineers from Volcengine also enhanced their visual AI models, addressing challenges such as limited detail in

Opinion

Exploring China's Path to Open Science

By TANG Zhexiao & CHEN Lei

Open science refers to the use of open access (OA) and open reuse of scientific knowledge to improve the level of scientific cooperation and information sharing, thus benefiting both science itself and humanity.

With its rapid development globally, open science benefits the public and exchanges knowledge, according to Yang Wei, academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), chairman of the CAST-UN Consultative Committee on Open Science and Global Partnership.

The UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science was adopted in 2021, affirming the importance of open science as a vital tool to bridge the science, technology and innovation gaps between and within countries, and to fulfill the human right of access to science.

Yang said that open science has prompted the scientific community to form a new scientific research paradigm, promote responsible research, and make scientific research more inclusive.

"Under the trend of open science, OA is a major change in the way academic papers are communicated," said Liu Xiwen, director of the National Science Library, CAS, "It transforms the long-standing pay-for-view model (terminal payment) into the open-for-view (front-end payment), making the academic information spreading more convenient and widespread."

China has been promoting open science for more than 20 years. Data shows that the number of open access papers and scientific data papers published by Chinese scholars has increased year by year.

Being sufficient in resources and authors, China has a huge advantage in scientific research output. Yang said, "We

must build a S&T data platform that matches our scientific research output, to achieve the goal of forming a multinational scientific data platform cluster and establishing a professional think tank aimed at global open science governance."

Open publishing against the background of open science is an inevitable trend in the development of English language scientific journals in China, said Peng Bin, general manager of China Science Publishing & Media. "Currently, most of the newly established English-language scientific journals in the nation have adopted the OA model to cooperate with international scientific publishers," he said.

Now more is being done to promote the development of open science in China.

Measures such as formulating a hierarchical data sharing policy for open data, using big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing and mobile services to support OA, along with signing cooperation agreements with scientific research funding agencies to fill the publishing fund gap, are being taken so as to adapt to the development of open science by both science and technology publishers and libraries, according to Peng.

Liu echoed this view, stressing that the original basic role and functions of the library have not changed under OA. The library should focus on playing the role of a knowledge service center, participate in academic information governance, and assume the social responsibility of fair access and effective distribution.

China needs to cultivate world-class scientific journals, and promote the construction of its own scientific literature and international digital publishing platforms, according to Peng Bin.



Researchers conduct polymerization tests on ultra-high hydrogen-sensitive catalysts in Beijing. (PHOTO: VCG)

Innovative and Green Development Thrives

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Localities are being encouraged to explore new approaches based on their own strategic positioning, advantages and local characteristics in 2025. Zhao suggested extending the industrial chain by developing new-type energy storage, green electricity-based hydrogen production, and green hydrogen derivatives in the construction of large-scale wind power photovoltaic bases in deserts.

Yuan Da, deputy secretary-general of the NDRC, said large-scale equipment

and consumer goods trade-in programs will be carried out on a larger scale in 2025, involving electronic information, safety production and projected agriculture, with a raised standard for subsidy and an improved mechanism.

The NDRC will coordinate with other departments to promote the reduction of carbon emissions and pollution, and green expansion and growth to advance comprehensive green transition in economic and social development in 2025, Zhao said.

Chinese Tech Benefits Sierra Leone Farmers

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Agriculture has always been a key area of cooperation between China and Sierra Leone.

Since the 1970s, China has sent agricultural experts to the country to carry out technical cooperation, and thousands of local farming households have benefited from these projects.

Under the framework of high-quality

joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China and Sierra Leone will further strengthen cooperation in fields such as planting, animal husbandry and agricultural machinery, promote the implementation of more Chinese agricultural technology and experience, and help local agricultural development and poverty reduction.