



Traditional style and cheerful

AKHOISAN activist and politician from the Eastern Cape arrived on the red carpet at the State of the Nation address on Friday in traditional attire, so that President Cyril Ramaphosa would not forget the indigenous Khoisan peoples.

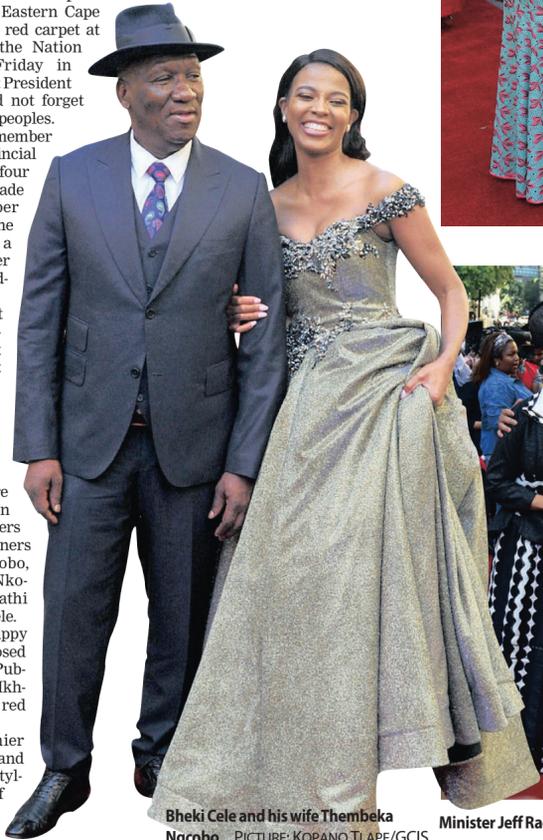
Christian Martin, a member of the Eastern Cape provincial legislature, was one of four Khoisan activists who made headlines in December when they walked from the Eastern Cape and staged a live-in protest and hunger strike at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

Their 24-day protest only ended after Ramaphosa came out to meet them where they had set up camp, but not before they garnered the attention and support of thousands of members of the public.

Martin joined others on the red carpet before the State of the Nation address, including ministers and their wives and partners such as David Mahlobo, Aaron Motsoaledi, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Nathi Mthethwa and Bheki Cele.

Everyone seemed happy and cheerful as they posed for cameras, including Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane, in a doll-like red dress.

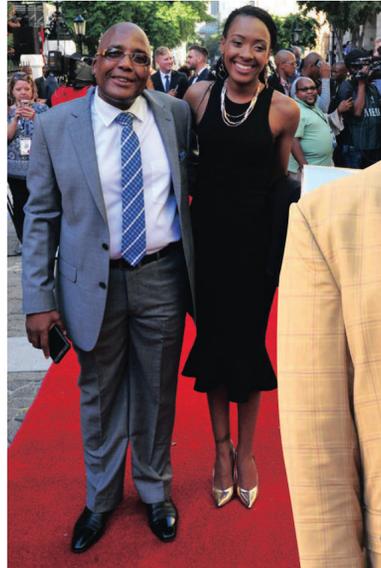
Western Cape Premier Helen Zille looked glam and fresh in a simple but stylish silky dress. — Staff Reporter/African News Agency (ANA)



Bheki Cele and his wife Thembeka Ngcobo PICTURE: KOPANO TLAPE/GCIS



Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. PICTURE: ELMOND JIYANE/GCIS



Aaron Motsoaledi and Lethabo Motsoaledi. PICTURE: KOPANO TLAPE/GCIS



Minister Jeff Radebe and wife Bridgette Motsepe. PICTURE: ELMOND JIYANE/GCIS



Lindiwe Zulu and her daughter Phindile. PICTURE: KOPANO TLAPE/GCIS



Nathi Nhleko and Nomcebo Mthembu. PICTURE: ELMOND JIYANE/GCIS

FEATURE

Reconfiguring the World System:

Envisioning inclusive development through a socially responsive economy

Ari Sitas

As South Africa takes over the BRICS Chairship, 2018 serves as a serious moment to take stock of achievements made collectively by the BRICS formation since its inception a decade ago. Perhaps the fact that we promulgated then the initial ideas around the creation of a New Development Bank and also that we insisted that BRICS Plus should be about African pathways of development were two critically important contributions. What else are we to be bringing onto the agenda?

We are taking the lead at a time when the world system is experiencing unprecedented challenges and shocks and where world economic growth has diminished from the 4.4% per annum during our 2013 stewardship to 2.5% per annum now, with only India and China still pulling the statistics up above the average and Russia and Brazil plummeting into negative figures and with us growing at 1%, lower than our annual population growth.

As we are taking the lead after a year of decisive Chinese leadership, we take heed of Premier Xi Jinping's caution that all of us all need to respond creatively to what he called the "new normal", as the "pattern is changing from large-scale and high speed extensive growth to high quality and efficient intensive growth" Xi Jinping (2017). GDP expansion for him is not a panacea anymore. Rather, he urges, "ecological progress, advances in science and technology and all-round innovation", are the factors that will hold the key to the door of the future. And here, not all innovation, "but innovation based on research and technologies of public benefit".

We are also taking the lead in a context where for our purposes the crises of poverty, unemployment and a gnawing inequality persist as serious impediments to the better life for all that our democratic breakthrough promised back in 1994. That is why the themes for our Think Tank for the year, *Envisioning inclusive development through a socially responsive economy*. We would like to inform our Chinese counterparts that we have taken to heart their Premier's take on a new development concept: "the concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development".

As you shall see we are working in tandem with critical priorities brought forward by the Government's Track I task teams to take the lead: in

peace and security, in innovations for development based on the fourth industrial revolution, in the creation of a Women and Gender BRICS forum and the creation of a Platform for an R&D Centre for Vaccine Development, Implementation and Innovation.

What follows is firstly a description of the prisms through which our work will be conducted and the priorities for the BRICS Think Tanks Council and its Academic Forum in late May 2018. Then we will try and make transparent the framework through which we see our priorities as Thinkers in the BRICS domain.

We are living in the midst and are witnessing a major reconfiguration of the world system which is nudging us away from the unipolar world that emerged with seeming confidence under the USA's stewardship on the eve of the Soviet world's collapse. Caught between the "end of history" talk and the enticing idea of the "information age" and its "global village", we were rather late in understanding a tectonic shift. But it was there in 2003 when the World Trade Organisation talks collapsed in Cancun and very much there in 2008-9 when the economic meltdown scuttled parts of the global economy.

For a while the Braudellian School around Immanuel Wallerstein have been arguing it is that we are living through a systemic crisis and that the US's hegemony was waning. Their arguments were dwarfed by the post-1989 dominance of neo-conservative thinking in politics and neo-liberalism in economics. The reconfiguration we are experiencing was of course punctuated by the emergence of BRICS as a developmental pact, rather than a "growth alliance".

At first it was shaped by a series of multilateral and bilateral interactions. Picture this: at a certain point of their endogenous development as industrial societies, each one of the BRICS partners sought a move towards an openness to the world economy: China's Four Modernisations Policy, Gorbachev's Perestroika, India's 4th Plan, Brazil's Cardoso-led globalisation and even Apartheid's New Economic Policy (later taken over by the ANC's macro-economic policy after 1994) nudged all of these societies into a world of markets that were self-serving for those who deemed themselves to be "developed".

Thus what followed as we say... followed: thus, the



BRICS 2018 - First lecture series launching the SA BRICS Presidency: Panel dialogue: Sanusha Naidoo (left), Dr Aquina Thulare (centre) & Professor Ari Sitas (right)

breakdown in Cancun, thus IBSA (India Brazil, South Africa cooperation), thus Russia-China Friendship agreement, thus China-Africa (Beijing Consensus), thus BRIC and later, BRICS. And by the Summits of Fortaleza and Dea, the concerns moved beyond the economic, to deal with inter-state relations and a range of norms and agreements that will need a number of talks and discussions like these to seriously explore. It is through them that the principle of a multi-polar world emerged as an architecture for and a commitment to the world system.

In other words, we are living through an epochal change, similar to the period between 1400-1700 which saw the gradual ascendance of the West and the involution of the Rest. But let us stay with the 1500s where China was undergoing an industrious revolution during the last century of its Ming period, of the 21 cities with more than 100 000 people, 15 were located East and only 3 in Europe, with Paris

catching up with Genoa and Venice. Like in that prior period, what is emerging and declining is highly interconnected, uneven and contradictory. For us in South Africa, the BRICS initiative is beyond the obvious new trade winds as well: the creation of a world system with a cooperative set of relations, respectful of sovereignty and difference was appreciated. What was also appreciated is that it may create a structured opportunity for Africa to move out of the blockages that rendered most of the continent to be a vassal state of the World Bank and the IMF. However frightening and uncertain a move away from the Washington Consensus might be, it seems like an unavoidable reality.

But we cannot remain with clichés: science demands us to understand what do hegemonic powers "systematise" and here we have only two case studies in world history, but we can also look at smaller units of absolutist states in interaction from the 11th to the 15th century CE. The clearest was odds with its direction and vision. This is not to suggest that the bureaucracy in DIRCO have been sitting on their laurels; they have shown stellar commitment in effecting the country's foreign policy pillars. But their jobs were made that much harder when it became unclear where and who was implementing the foreign policy objectives. What is needed now is clarity and coherence around our foreign agenda is.

So what will Cyril Ramaphosa's BRICS Strategy be? It will be one that builds on Davos and extends the charm offensive to make BRICS an indelible part of the country's growth, employment and investment pathway. While President Ramaphosa is seized with reconfiguring the domestic landscape, and fairly aware of how he will be judged in delivering on the big

what Britain achieved between the 1790s and the 1890s. It was remarkable and unprecedented in world history. For a brief period it reconfigured the world system to by the late 19th century manage to combine control over material and symbolic value. What it achieved in the eras of colonialism and imperialism was beyond industrialisation and pure competitive advantage.

Looked at with a cruel eye: it was a system that aimed and systematised towards Unipolarity but which compromised on variety to immunise deviance and threats. It is the very system that the US tried to re-steer after the 2nd World War.

It is the challenge to our academic community to decipher what about BRICS is novel in terms of its reconfiguration efforts, despite the fact that it is work in progress. But the critical work needs its time: in nudging the world towards a "cautious" multipolarity, how do the new steering systems work around equality of voice, what the Chinese are arguing for "win-win" relationships, "people to people" encounters and new developmental priorities? And what about South Africa? What do we bring to the agenda?

BRICS is not challenging the existing multilateral system, nor is it trying to subvert or create alternatives to the UN system's working institutions. What it is trying to do is to strengthen it whilst at the same time create a multipolar framework for cooperation. How we understand the word "reconfiguration" must have this in mind.

Finally, on narratives of success: whatever is articulated it will not be heard clearly in networks that have already cast BRICS as a negative and short-term phenomenon. The fact that these countries, represent 40 percent of the world population, that they generated 20 percent of world output in 2016, and have accounted for 50 percent of global growth since the end of 2009 (even though South Africa joined later) should add some gravitas. There is a lot to do and to steal from the late poet Bra Willie Kgositsile:

"it is always possible to do more and to do it better, always because the difference that a day might make celebrates the day that makes the difference"; and the late Nelson Mandela had this to say: "It always seems impossible until it's done". Let's do it.

promises of growing an economy that creates jobs, the newly elected President of the Republic is also acutely attentive that he has to make the BRICS work for the country's national development plan and socio-economic priorities. This means changing the completion of the trade relations between the country and the other BRICS' countries, increasing the investment footprint and ensuring that South African investors are equally able to access the BRICS markets. The stage is set for President Ramaphosa to introduce himself to the BRICS leaders in July and present his vision of a rebalanced non-aligned vision that encompasses more than business as usual approach but a more pragmatic and integrated tactic that ensures greater economic traction between South Africa and the BRICS.

BRICS Strategy: Towards the 2018 Johannesburg

Sanusha Naidoo

In six months time, South Africa will host the 10th BRICS Summit. This is a significant achievement since the grouping became a formalised inter-state platform.

The timing of the Summit could not come at a better time for Pretoria. The significance in chairing and hosting the Summit represents a strategic moment for the host country to take advantage of its Chairperson in pushing for key institutional mechanisms in terms of global development and strategic governance. It also exemplifies the opportunity for the South African government to identify and pursue a set of objectives aligned to the

national political and economic interests that must address the triple helix challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

And it is precisely in this context that South Africa's BRICS Presidency under Cyril Ramaphosa government needs to be understood.

In the past several weeks as ANC President and, now, as President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa has shown dexterity in what he sees as critical junctures for recalibrating the country's ailing economy. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Ramaphosa pursued an agenda of rebranding South Africa as an investment destination. He showed that he

is a man on a mission to reclaim the country's State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as being held hostage to be looted. Instead under his watch he sees the SOEs together with international and domestic investors to be drivers of the economy and assist in rebuilding the country's socio-economic base so that poor and marginalised are provide with access to their basic human right resources. The message in Davos was loud and clear: SA remains open for business but with policy certainty and stability.

The suave of Ramaphosa in Davos was also about retuning the default setting of our foreign policy gauge. For some time now South Africa has been at