



Strategic Alliances and Emerging Opportunities: Assessing the Benefits of Zambia's Membership in BRICS

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Abstract

Through improved trade relations, more foreign direct investment (FDI), and access to new, resource-rich markets, Zambia stands to gain a great deal from joining BRICS. Additionally, membership might make it simpler to obtain alternative financing for infrastructure and national development projects from the New Development Bank (NDB), possibly with more accommodating terms than those offered by Western organizations. In terms of politics and diplomacy, Zambia could benefit from joining BRICS by strengthening its bilateral relations with its fellow members, raising its profile internationally, and offering a forum for increased involvement in global governance, all of which would help create a more multipolar world. Along with possible expansion in tourism and educational partnerships, cultural exchanges in science, innovation, the arts, and sports could promote better livelihoods and understanding between people. Zambia could advance technologically more quickly through shared R&D and technology transfer, especially in resource management. In terms of the environment, BRICS participation could aid in efforts to adapt to climate change and offer "green funding" for projects involving renewable energy. Zambia may encounter difficulties, though, such as strained ties with Western allies like the US and EU and vulnerability to secondary sanctions or geopolitical balancing as a result of member state policies like those of China and Russia. Macroeconomic obstacles include the requirement for substantial institutional and legal preparedness for treaty ratification and regulatory reforms, as well as mandatory capital contributions to the NDB that may impact domestic priorities. Concerns include currency mismatches resulting from the volatility of the Zambian kwacha, as well as trade and currency settlement risks. To prevent endangering market access, it is essential to stay in line with current trade preferences, such as the US's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Building strong policy frameworks and institutional capacities for successful initiative implementation, especially in green technology and climate change adaptation, as well

as forming expert teams to examine BRICS developments are some of the strategic recommendations for Zambia. Creating a thorough foreign trade plan is also essential. Addressing domestic institutional and legal readiness, closely monitoring possible geopolitical risks, and reducing trade imbalances are all necessary for effectively utilizing BRICS membership.

Keywords: BRICS, membership, strategic alliance, member state.

1.0 Introduction

The 15th Summit of BRICS Heads of State in Johannesburg formally welcomed Zambia to the membership. In a virtual speech to the Summit in August 2023, President Hakainde Hichilema thanked the present membership for their overwhelming support of Zambia's BRICS membership bid. Zambia's participation will enable better cooperation and partnerships with all members' businesses to achieve Zambia's strategic economic goals. To achieve the noble goal of delivering quantifiable benefits for 41 member countries and their inhabitants, the Zambian Government looks forward to faster engagement in BRICS working and specialized groups. Coordination with African regional groups would also give BRICS goals an African perspective (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

Zambia is a good candidate for BRICS membership due to its location, infrastructure, and historical links. Zambia will strengthen political discussion, collaborate on significant international and regional problems, and foster peaceful and stable communities by joining BRICS. BRICS participation will improve Zambia's macroeconomic stability, reintegration into the global financial and trade system, access to BRICS markets, and FDI. BRICS presents Zambia with a unique chance to become East Africa's commercial powerhouse, like Johannesburg's status in the south (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Better access to Africa's biggest economy would position Zambia to support regional commerce and investment. Improved market access will also boost domestic producers' growth and sustainability prospects as they can expand beyond a local focus, compete more fiercely, and invest heavily in productivity in anticipation of greater opportunities (Boulle and Chella, 2014).

2.0 Economic Growth Opportunities

Joining the BRICS group gives Zambia the possibilities to expand economically, address sustainable development issues, and promote human well-being. Geopolitical alliances are changing and strengthening, particularly in the Global South, affecting the global economy. Zambia is exploring ways to broaden its foreign relations beyond conventional bilateral alliances, including joining BRICS (Kim & Tukić, 2015). When created in 2009, the BRICS organization included Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. At the initial plenary session of the 15th BRICS Summit on August 24, 2023, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates joined BRICS, completing the first phase of growth. The next BRICS expansion phase will consider additional nations based on a set of criteria. The COVID-19 epidemic worsened emerging and developing economies, especially in Africa. Countries are struggling to revive their economy while dealing with pandemic health demands. Africa is

projected to feel the pandemic's economic damage longer and worse. However, foreign financial institutions expect the African economy to grow rapidly in the medium to long term. Economic growth helps overcome these problems and improve citizen well-being for sustainable development. Therefore, Zambia may join this growing bloc of nations with comparable geopolitical, macroeconomic, and international development ideals. The advantages of BRICS participation are projected to be realized faster and more efficiently than previous global projects.

2.1 Increased Trade Relations

BRICS membership gives Zambia access to new export markets and investors, boosting its trade and investment prospects (Melo Media, 2024). Zambia may also reduce its dependency on the World Bank, the US, and the EU by accessing other finance choices. BRICS nations respect and understand each other and do not intervene in internal politics. Zambia must balance multiple conflicting forces and alliances between BRICS and Western allies while preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity. They provide access to a broader recovering market and allow further industrialization.

Diversifying trade partners will also reduce the possibility of challenging Zambia's sovereignty and territorial integrity since the African Union chairmanship will provide Zambia with the biggest Covid 19 vaccine market. Thus, joining BRICS will enable Zambia to access the new BRICS structures. BRICS nations founded the New Development Bank to supplement Western institutions and lend for infrastructure projects. Zambia is obligated to the World Bank, therefore joining might consolidate and expand existing institutions and cooperation frameworks as equal members (Carpintero, Murray & Bellver, 2016).

2.2 Foreign Direct Investment

Zambia, rich in natural resources, is a good BRICS target. Zambia, one of the world's most mineral-rich nations, has privatised its mining sector, which presents great opportunities for FDI. The BRICS want Zambian FDI. Zambia hosted USD 25 billion in BRICS inflows for mining, industrial, and financial projects. This was due to the mining tax regime review, which made foreign investors cautious in the telecommunications industry, the reorganization of ZAMTEL, Zain, and Vodacom, and Indian investors' rejection of building a USD 600 million factory (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

The BRICS have the same motives to invest in Zambia as many significant foreign investors due to their perceived fear of expropriation. Since Zambia does not have large BRICS enterprises, a BRICS move would help develop an investor brand for the BRICS. Zambia has strong liberalization policies, cheap interest rates, and a well-educated workforce like the nations that have received 35% of BRICS inflows. A successful BRICS entrance approach that led to local aid has depended significantly on small and medium-sized enterprises neglected by giant foreign corporations.

Zambia might benefit from business facilitation from the BRICS, most of which are not multinationals. Zambia allows developing market investments since the administration discourages Western investors. There appear to be fewer risk worries, and the BRICS have more

experience with fair investment and bigger resources or readiness to combine smaller ones to acquire larger ventures (Carpintero, Murray & Bellver, 2016).

2.3 Access to New Markets

Zambia considers joining BRICS a smart move to new markets. Countries with substantial populations, GDPs, and resources make up the BRICS market. These nations have reliable energy, minerals, water, forests, and arable land. They dominate energy exploration, investment, and commerce. According to worldwide markets and consumer buying power, BRICS has 3.3 billion people or 44% of the world's population. This market's growth bodes well for its future. Zambia may get access to new markets by joining BRICS (Melo Media Zambia, 2024; Kim & Tukić, 2015). The Zambian government is negotiating to join BRICS due to its potential advantages. Zambia is also improving connections with China and Russia. Zambia works with Brazil and India in agriculture. Zambia's BRICS membership application shows its determination to participate in the global economy and access vast developing markets.

2.4 Strategic Diversification of Partnerships

A key component of Zambia's economic diplomacy is its pursuit of strategic partnership diversification, which aims to increase development options while preventing over-reliance on any one bloc. President Hakainde Hichilema has courted Gulf states for mining and energy investment, underscoring the significance of "not putting all eggs in one basket" (Financial Times, 2023). Zambia has been able to strengthen its relationships with longstanding allies like the United States and China, thanks to this well-rounded, non-aligned strategy, which has also drawn investment from countries like Brazil, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates (Chatham House, 2023). This diversification is demonstrated by recent initiatives, including a US\$2 billion solar deal with Masdar (UAE), nuclear science cooperation with Russia, restored trade relations between India and Zambia, and regional projects like the Zambia - DRC EV battery initiative under the AfCFTA (Bramston Associates, 2025; Chatham House, 2023). By giving access to alternative financing, wider markets, and a more powerful voice in global governance, joining BRICS would further institutionalize this strategy, lessen dependency on Western institutions, and strengthen Zambia's multipolar positioning (Melo Media Zambia, 2024).

2.5 Access to Alternative Financing

Access to alternative funding sources, especially through the New Development Bank (NDB), is one of the biggest advantages Zambia could gain from joining BRICS. The NDB was founded in 2014 by the BRICS countries with the goal of financing sustainable development and infrastructure without the strict conditions typically found at Western organizations like the World Bank and IMF (The Africa Report, 2024). The NDB promises loans that prioritize national development goals while respecting sovereignty, which is a promise for Zambia, which has struggled with debt restructuring and budgetary constraints (Melo Media Zambia, 2024).

Given Zambia's pressing need to finance significant projects in the fields of energy, mining, agriculture, and digital infrastructure, this alternative financing method is especially alluring. For instance, by boosting grid infrastructure and increasing renewable capacity, BRICS funding could support projects like the US\$2 billion solar power agreement with Masdar in the United Arab Emirates (Chatham House, 2023). Furthermore, BRICS lending frameworks frequently place an emphasis on South-South cooperation, which may be better suited to Zambia's economic circumstances than conventional austerity-driven initiatives (Nile Post, 2025). Zambia's membership in BRICS would improve its chances of receiving future disbursements, diversifying its financial partners and lowering its over-reliance on Western creditors, even though the NDB has not yet substantially increased lending in Africa (The Africa Report, 2025).

3.0 Political and Diplomatic Advantages

Zambia's BRICS membership allows it to build relationships with important southern economies. Today, global South countries are concentrating on political, diplomatic, and economic cooperation. Sub-Saharan African governments' UN General Assembly efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been hindered by global North resistance. Zambia's 2023 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) national report included 2030 Agenda implementation. BRICS participation may improve diplomatic and political collaboration with global South economies, including Zambia, which has unsustainable public external debt. This may help Zambia interact with the global North (Kim & Tukić, 2015).

Zambia might collaborate with China, India, Brazil, and South Africa on food and energy security, COVID-19 pandemic recovery, and industrialization if it joins the HLPD Thematic Group-3. Common will in the global South may lead to win-win collaboration. Zambia has failed to benefit from global North collaboration, yet BRICS participation might benefit all global South advances. Thus, joining BRICS would allow Zambian political leaders to step up their political and diplomatic efforts.

3.1. Strengthened International Presence

Zambia's BRICS membership will boost its international standing. The idea that Zambia is at the bottom of the global South's pecking order because BRICS is a second-tier state is untrue. Over half of global growth and GDP come from BRICS. Zambia's candidacy for BRICS membership suggests it can compete despite Sub-Saharan Africa's low and shrinking investment share. According to Kim and Tukić (2015), Zambia aims to reap the same advantages as other BRICS members, including investment opportunities, affordable loans, sustainable development partnerships, scientific collaboration, and trade revenue diversification (Carpintero, Murray & Bellver, 2016).

3.2. Enhanced Bilateral Relationship

According to Simutowe and Rastopchina (2023), Zambia may strengthen bilateral relationships with BRICS members with strong economies by joining. Foreign direct investment is likely to increase with bloc membership, boosting economic growth. Zambia could finance infrastructure

and entice multinational firms with more FDI. The multibillion-dollar Lusaka-Ndola dual highway building project, a joint equity participation arrangement for the Kafue Gorge Lower Hydro Power Station, and copper-belt mining and energy projects are among these investments. Government support, favorable political, legal, and economic conditions, capacity and ability to make proposals, receptivity to Zambia's proposals, and financial resources for cooperation will all affect Zambia's ability to form beneficial bilateral relations with the BRICS states (Kambudzi, 2024). Senior Zambian government officials' attempts to enhance BRICS cooperation would also affect these processes. Financial resources strongly impact Zambia-BRICS bilateral ties. Improving ties requires goodwill towards Zambia and its initiatives.

Zambia's connections with each BRICS country are complicated and subject to change. Zambia's future connections with South Africa, China, and India seem promising. Zambia's potential to build bilateral ties with Brazil and Russia may face substantial challenges (Carpintero, Murray & Bellver, 2016).

3.3. Participation in Global Governance

Non-Western nations are democratizing international organizations to improve representation in global governance. Zambia can help create a multipolar, democratic world by joining BRICS. The high-profile BRICS summit allows BRICS member states to discuss and collaborate on developing nations' and emerging markets' social, economic, and technical issues. Zambia can actively participate in multilateral development institutions' efforts to increase BRICS countries' capacity to mobilize financial resources for inclusive and sustainable development, support liquidity and macroeconomic stability, and create a platform for complementary collaboration for mutual benefit and win-win results by joining the BRICS framework. Zambia can defend its stance and immediately address issues with accountable authorities via BRICS participation.

Zambia will help shape and structure discussions and initiatives to increase input into the BRICS framework, including roundtables with finance ministers, central bank governors, and business leaders, as well as regional BRICS enforcement of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement and liquidity and monetary policy. These advantages allow Zambia access to funding to organize its economy around capital goods less commodity-centric supply networks and more energy power. This debate will encourage Asia and Africa to negotiate with international organizations against such measures.

Zambia might offer legitimacy to BRICS Summit preparations or improve African cooperation, an unknown but prospective advantage. South Africa is the sole African BRICS chair, however, power disruptions at the end of 2022 prompted BRICS to support Power Beaming Antennae (PBA) technology.

4.0 Cultural Exchange and Cooperation

Cultural interchange and collaboration across science, innovation, arts, and sports improve people's livelihoods and promote international friendship, mutual understanding, and social cohesion. Zambia's entry encourages multi-party cooperation to build BRICS and establish its

agenda. Zambia aims to collaborate with BRICS countries to improve political communication, trust, and direct involvement for inclusive prosperity and vibrant growth (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Zambia addresses global and regional issues including terrorism, human trafficking, and cybercrime. Zambia also hopes BRICS and other like-minded nations will work together on these challenges, notably via the UN Africa Group. Zambia would support economic recovery and sustainable global growth by promoting the resilience and stability of global supply chains, improving financial regulation, transparency, and accountability to curb illicit financial flows, and leveraging the digital economy for development (Bond, 2017).

Zambia recognizes vaccination access disparities in the Global South. Landlocked countries with inadequate healthcare, medicine procurement, and export logistics would need large expenditures to meet North-set vaccine manufacturing criteria. Access to immunizations will help preserve continental advances (Boulle and Chella, 2014).

4.1. Cultural Diplomacy

The connection between a state and its international audiences dominates public diplomacy. It involves shaping others' foreign policy choices and offering exchanges and scholarships to establish a good image overseas. Campaigns include building or promoting a desired national identity, images, and messages, managing engagement and exchange platforms, and engaging international audiences including academics, youth, and the media via grassroots and elite campaigns. It involves several entities, not only foreign ministries.

Globalization in the post-1990s has made cultural diplomacy vital in the internationalization of arts and culture. Many cultural exchange platforms have been created, and in-depth cultural and art exchanges have occurred. Cooperation is institutionalizing. South Africa has shared information, improved multilateral collaboration, and deepened cultural understanding with other members.

Zambia has a rich culture and tradition. Zambia's varied cultural legacy may launch its economic resurgence. Zambians and Africans will live more peacefully via cultural diplomacy. Zambia recently spent considerably in cultural diversification development and management. Cultural resource conservation is governed by the National Heritage Conservation Commission Act. Tourism and hospitality training institutions exist, some fully operating.

Cultural diplomacy can help youngsters promote peace, tolerance, mutual respect, and African ideals of coexistence in heterogeneous societies. Zambian music, ballads, traditional dances, theatre, visual arts, ceramics, and other displays will increase resource mobilization for livelihoods. Recently, culture has gained worldwide prominence. Zambia lacks a legislative framework and cultural strategy for culture development.

4.2. Educational Partnerships

Zambia's education development is systematically influenced by BRICS and its goals. Education helps many. World leaders pledged to provide universal access to excellent education, recognizing its transformational power as the cornerstone for all development objectives.

Zambia's BRICS stance Leadership in education will keep educational opportunities and systems on national and international development agendas (Bond, 2017).

All BRICS states must collaborate on global education and inspire other emerging nations to do the same. This includes forecasting the deployment of high-quality educational resources, mitigating the negative effects of natural disasters and global challenges on education, and supporting global educational governance and international human resource communication and cooperation. Zambia and other emerging nations are becoming more relevant in global education governance. The BRICS nations' educational plans and efforts are attracting attention. BRICS education efforts might vary from official conversations to informal cooperation (Boulle and Chella, 2014).

To successfully address global education concerns, BRICS countries must collaborate with other nations (Kim & Tukić, 2015). BRICS states may improve multi-lateral educational frameworks and procedures via these Global Action and Leadership Platforms. No BRICS countries have a permanent education-focused international organization. Thus, the BRICS Education Conference may build on existing educational frameworks and procedures, use other institutions' and organizations' knowledge, skills, and experience, and encourage educational planning and practice development across nations.

4.3. Tourism Development

Tourism is vital to Zambia's economy. Zambia has abundant natural resources, making it a top Southern African tourism destination. The government, stakeholders, enterprises, and NGOs work to promote Zambia as a tourism destination. But Zambian tourism is underutilized. Tourist attractions are one of the least used in Africa despite tourism infrastructure. When marketing Zambian cuisine-related goods and companies, consider the country's culinary tourism potential. Zambia has a diverse range of traditional foods with distinct flavors (Charzyński *et al.*, 2017).

Zambia is a little-known and under-visited Southern African country. While it has fewer tourist attractions than neighboring nations, its national parks make it appealing. But a rudimentary tourism infrastructure has been created there. Zambia has great tourism potential since its natural resources are underexploited compared to Botswana, Namibia, and Kenya. Zambia has several intriguing and underrated natural and cultural attractions. Culinary tourism is crucial to many nations' economies, especially those that promote local ingredients and make tourist products from them (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

However, culinary events and restaurants with excellent native food would boost Zambia's appeal. Zambian culinary tourism is relatively young due to globalization, and few efforts promote native meals and beverages. However, the first Zambian cuisine festival, cookbooks, and periodicals featuring Zambian menus were produced in 2016, providing prospects for such projects. However, the state, local authorities, and organizations must work together with businesses to promote Zambian culinary tourism.

5.0 Technological Advancement

Joining BRICS may help Zambia improve technology. Zambia, like many other nations, wants to accelerate technological progress in many economic areas. This rapid transformation is designed to boost economic development, create employment, and reduce poverty. If Zambia wants to grow technologically, it may need to join BRICS.

International competitiveness is increasingly based on knowledge rather than other production characteristics (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Zambia's slogan, Science and Technology for Development, is more relevant than ever since new technologies are needed to modernize agriculture, industry, leisure, the public sector, health, education, etc. In the modern international economy, no country can fulfill its technical demands using local resources alone. Thus, developing countries should participate in international technological cooperation, including foreign direct investment, commerce in commodities and services and human resources, contractual agreements, and research and development.

Zambia may achieve rapid technical progress by joining BRICS. Since BRICS nations want to improve mutually beneficial collaboration, they focus on technology transfer, development, and sharing and human resource development, including education, training, and youth exchanges. These aims are crucial for Zambia because they enable technological transfer, development, and sharing throughout its economy.

5.1. Access to Innovative Technologies

Zambia's membership in BRICS+ will provide new technology for exploring and using its enormous natural resources. The group's technologies will allow Zambia to "mine" data from its natural resources and turn it into valuable commodities, creating riches for its population. BRICS+ nations including Brazil, Russia, China, and India lead big data collecting and handling. Globally, BRICS+ countries have enough data sets and methods to analyze natural resource data (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Zambia can create a fair and beneficial resource exploitation paradigm using these technologies. With its entrance into BRICS+, Zambia will get data-aggregating and mining technology to sustainably harness, extract, organize, analyze, and share natural resource extraction data. Building institutional capacity at all levels of government, the public sector, and academia to develop conventional and innovative capabilities for a fair and equitable resource exploitation model is crucial.

Other natural resources stakeholders include abusive foreign governments, rogue states, and prominent business sector companies. Data mining allows Zambia to track all participants in this sector to prevent resource exploitation. Zambia may negotiate better with unethical partners by collecting data on how each participant uses the resource, increasing natural resource earnings. Besides improving state capability in the resource domain, data on how all parties interact with the resource would help Zambia award industrial licenses wisely by revealing suspicious players. Thus, BRICS+ technologies will strengthen Zambia and enable it to play a major role in the global natural resource ecosystem by engaging with all stakeholders.

5.2. Collaboration in Research and Development

Zambia Conference on Science, Technology, and Innovation (ZACSTI) leads the creation, harmonization, and implementation of national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies, strategies, and regulations. The African Union's African Strategy for STI promotes African development and helps them maximize their contribution to human well-being. AfriSTI Policy Conference in Addis Ababa in 2007 recommended the EU-APSTI Strategy, which was endorsed by the AU 14th regular session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in February 2010. One of the EU-APSTI's major activities, the Africa-EU Partnership on Climate Change, develops a 2050 vision for African and European climate change collaboration and establishes a monitoring and follow-up platform (Bond, 2017). As part of the Grand Challenges of Africa, creative science and technology support food systems and nutrition, climate change, water security and sustainable water management, energy, and Africa's response to global health crises. Regional and international cooperation on research, technology, and innovation should be explored to boost national human resources and infrastructural capabilities. African Organisation for Standardisation, African Academy of Sciences, African Union, and OECD research networks may address a country's and region's main challenges and demands via obligatory analysis; gain consent and engagement from competent national entities; reach above boundaries and develop regional proactive and project-based cooperation; seek and establish collaboration and share responsibilities with international organizations on important issues.

6.0 Sustainable Development Goals

Zambia has a chance to recommit to social inclusion, gender equality, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and economic growth while seeking structural change with the Sustainable Growth Agenda. Trade and investment are crucial to economic development, productivity, job creation, and poverty reduction. The growing BRICS nations have become one of the world's biggest economic generators, contributing to more than half of the world's economic growth and population. The role of Zambian social sectors in budgetary allocation and public finance management has been stressed (Boulle and Chella, 2014).

The present discussion over metallurgical cobalt and copper processing and the natural resource-based industrialization strategy provide optimism for improving Zambia's mining sector's contribution to inclusive economic growth and development. Investment in trained personnel is needed to help reduce employment success. Credible public institutions must budget mineral taxation revenues for productive investments for efficient public finance management. For the mining supply chain down-streaming to be successful, structural inequalities in mineral processing and marketing must be addressed, along with regulatory capacities to prevent industrial espionage and ensure technical compliance (Kim & Tukić, 2015).

6.1. Support for Environmental Initiatives

BRICS participation may also help Zambia's environmental programs increase resilience and adaptive management. Zambia has suffered from climate change. In 2023, 17.4 million people faced food-related climate shocks, particularly during the 2021-2022 drought and COVID-19

pandemic (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Zambia submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) on mitigation, vulnerability assessments, adaptation requirements, and planned actions at the late 2021 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Zambia estimates US\$86 billion for 15 years of planned adaptation activities (2022–2030, 2031–2040, and 2041–2055). The 5-year pre-2030 planned measures may not meet the NDC objective due to resource constraints (Bond, 2017). Thus, non-conventional finance must be prioritized and encouraged to undertake measures. Zambia must continue to address resource mobilization, bankable projects that qualify for climate funding, institutional and technical competence, data, and estimates. Zambia may be helped by the UN to mobilize climate funding as other BRICS countries are listed as climate finance Providers and Coordinators of early warning systems, green financing, and climate-resilient infrastructure. BRICS uses multi-lateral development banks like the NDB, BRICS economic development banks, and China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to finance climate change. Finance, tech transfer, and supportive policies for climate mitigation and adaptation may be part of the partnership. Lusaka may use this to crowdfund massive climate financing (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

6.2. Investment in Renewable Energy

Zambia might get “green funding” for renewable energy projects via the BRICS. This might include many energy sources. Today, 90% of Zambia's electricity comes from 1980s-built hydroelectric power facilities. Insufficient rainfall in recent decades has caused an energy problem, causing Zambia to buy electricity from Namibia, South Africa, and Congo since hydroelectric power facilities are not running at full capacity (Nikolaevna, Gorkaltseva & Sinkala, 2017).

The nation has strong solar radiation and 3,000 hours of sunlight a year, making solar energy applications promising. Large solar power plants might attract investors. Wind energy is an excellent renewable energy. Wind farms may be erected on government or service assets since they are smaller than solar facilities. Geothermal energy from over 80 hot springs should be considered. This might be geothermal power plant cleanup and settlement (Yangailo, 2025).

Bioenergy is another investment priority. Zambians define bioenergy as biological fuel, not fossil. Agriculture, forest waste, animal waste, and city trash are energy crisis friendly. Biofuel investments are needed to boost the bioenergy industry and use biofuels in transport (Bowa *et al.*, 2017).

Decentralized mini-hydropower plants might provide mealtime energy. Tiny energy plants of up to 300 kWh might serve tiny towns. Consulting services might outline the timing and feasibility of establishing such facilities for target firms. Zambian corporations might build energy facilities. Early herbal farms should be built with investor businesses offering comprehensive, high-tech infrastructure (Bowa *et al.*, 2017).

7.0 Challenges of Zambia Joining BRICS

Zambia must plan to maximize BRICS participation and prevent pitfalls. Importantly, Zambia's BRICS commitment requires continuing “one South” regional dynamics to maximize political

and economic engagement in advantage-marketing activities. Second, as a prospective member, Zambia faces significant hurdles in which BRICS is implicated, including the gap between Zambia's government and BRICS committee aspirations. These interests may worsen with BRICS membership (Bond, 2017). More broadly, there are worries about China gaining domination and unrestricted access to Zambian resources and Zambia's moral authority in soliciting automobile and infrastructure investment from China while urging it to improve its behavior. Addressing external concerns may be Zambia's duty (Kim & Tukić, 2015). Thirdly, Africans struggle to understand Zambia's BRICS membership and its limited diplomatic interaction and tourism to Brazil, Russia, and India.

Zambia's BRICS prospects will suffer if it does not overcome these obstacles. These become metaphors when members acknowledge, debate, and strive to resolve them, although most enlargements have gone well. Therefore, Zambia's neutrality and number-leveraging have worked until a political-economic imbalance confronts them. Large indirect investment in such issues is justified despite being part of the BRICS group. Given the universal recognition of Zambia's issue, pushing BRICS to address infra-country scarcities like infrastructure, information, and appraisal in more favorable trade conditions seems promising. Intra-BRICS is concerned about providing Zambia with its club to test nations' economic and anti-colonialist strategies and intentions (Boulle and Chella, 2014). This approach may be pursued while considering endorsement and member association sensitivities (including China's danger of feeling singled out).

7.1 Exposure to sanctions and geopolitical balancing

Navigating the changing global geopolitical order is one of Zambia's main challenges. China and Russia are two BRICS members whose policies frequently clash with those of Western nations. Given Western restrictions on Russian banks and businesses, Zambia may be more vulnerable to secondary sanctions risks if it becomes more aligned with BRICS, especially in the financial sector (CFR, 2025; EU Council, 2025). Zambia's ties with the US and EU, partners that offer trade access, aid, and concessional financing through agreements like AGOA, may be strained as a result.

7.2 Macroeconomic and Debt-Related Limitations

While consolidating the benefits of its debt restructuring process, Zambia continues to be covered by an IMF Extended Credit Facility. The nation's fiscal space for new financial commitments is constrained by its continued high risk of debt distress (IMF, 2024; ODI, 2025). Entering the New Development Bank (NDB), which requires paid-in and callable capital contributions, is frequently a requirement for joining BRICS. This could take limited public funds away from pressing domestic priorities in an economy with limited resources.

7.3 Trade and Currency Settlement Risks

Copper is Zambia's main export to BRICS countries, particularly China, while manufactured goods and machinery make up most of its imports (OEC, 2023). To lessen dependency on the US dollar, BRICS initiatives promote trade settlement in local currencies. However, if trade moves

away from dollar invoicing, there is a greater chance of currency mismatches and liquidity shortages due to Zambia's kwacha's volatility and lack of deep hedging markets (TriContinental, 2024). This might make monetary policy more difficult and destabilize import prices.

7.4 Institutional and Legal Preparedness

All treaties and multilateral agreements must be approved by parliament and legally domesticated in accordance with Zambia's Ratification of International Agreements Act No. 34 of 2016 (Parliament of Zambia, 2016). Significant institutional and legal changes, such as treaty ratification, budgetary pledges, and regulatory reforms in payments and financial supervision, would be necessary for BRICS membership, and especially for NDB accession. These procedures could be complicated or delayed by a lack of administrative capacity (UNECE/GRP, 2023).

7.5 Harmony with Current Trade Preferences

Particularly through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with the United States, Zambia enjoys preferential access to Western markets. Zambia's eligibility during AGOA's annual review process may be at risk if any policy changes indicate a shift away from Western partnerships (USTR, 2024; AGOA.info, 2025). Losing this access would lessen the advantages of BRICS membership and make Zambian exports less competitive, especially in the textile and agricultural sectors.

8.0 Strategic Recommendations for Zambia

Countries compete to position themselves strategically in a complicated geopolitical terrain (Ngubo, 2016). Zambia should create a foreign trade strategy that communicates aims and objectives to the global economy and other nations (Kim & Tukić, 2015). This involves guiding a diplomatic and consular apparatus that promotes foreign commerce and implements trade policy in international organizations.

Technical knowledge and economic impact are weak in Zambia. Building a team of experts on new developments, highlighting countries of greatest interest, paying donors with cooperation funds to gather information on ambiguous countries, and responding to national and regional inquiries rather than speaking alone can help address information asymmetry in challenging countries. Domestic manufacturers will help to adapt, and dump imports will be stopped. Influencing relevant international laws will also be made. Recruits will learn about Zambia's trade policies, including the formulation of duty-free import lists, tariff and agreement compliance, and organizational capability (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

Zambia wants to improve relations with neighboring and regional nations by expanding trade incentive agreements, addressing price competition abuses, developing a monitoring framework, and helping local companies harmed by such changes. Popular support for such links would encourage relevant professionals to influence decision-makers. BMOs might also help farmers find new ways to compete with multinationals.

8.1. Policy Framework Development

The research also recommended that Zambia establish technical committees in relevant ministries to develop implementation strategies and policy frameworks for Parliament. Also, consider revisions to the Political Parties' Acts and constitution. The government also considering creating a semi-autonomous commission with an independent budget to establish facilities and operate the Zambia chapter of the New Development Bank. Countries have had success with such committees. Laws and rules may be draughted to let the new commission manage Zambia's investment fund (Bond, 2017).

Before BRICS, traditional financial vehicles existed globally. Western nations greatly influence these vehicles, although they are not completely controlled by them. Since entering White Western finance, cars have been developed, although they are stateless. Other than that, the East has not projected or undertaken considerable financial power. BRICS is East-focused. Zambia will also gain from BRICS institutions globally (Boulle and Chella, 2014).

Given BRICS member states limited financial experience and the drastically different and more complicated global landscape in which BRICS would exist, establishing a new regional bank without sufficient experience and pre-existing institutions would be risky. Further complicating things, the World Bank dominates Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and South America, which Zambia considers vital to its economic future. They are co-evolving and building response mechanisms. The BRICS, particularly China, must study that history to avoid World Bank blunders (Bond, 2017).

8.2. Strengthening Institutional Capacities

Zambia's participation in BRICS enables technology and capacity-building cooperation to improve its green and carbon-neutral state, despite environmental and systemic human security issues. Zambia lacks the delivery capability and institutional structure to implement green laws, leading to unimplemented policy draughting. Zambia's BRICS membership creates chances for green technology education, knowledge transfer, and technology transfer, promoting a green state (Kim & Tukić, 2015). BRICS institutions can help Zambia become carbon-neutral and green. Zambia may collaborate with partners on proficiency and modernization control via BRICS knowledge networks. Zambia may get climate change adaptation aid. Other Zambian parties may acquire data and witness confirmation on informative tools to enhance trustworthy and defect-free green protection. BRICS can use its expertise to help Zambia attend and coordinate regional heritage protection and governance events. These technologies may improve commission monitoring and finance. BRICS investment will boost Zambia's market and financial capacity for sustainable development (Rapanyane & Shai, 2019).

9.0 Conclusion

Zambia's BRICS Associate Membership is a major foreign policy milestone. The clearance supports local claims that the new government would adopt an economically realistic and non-interventionist global stance. Joining BRICS will boost the economy. Zambia will gain larger markets, increased investment, advanced technology, wisdom in cooperation and coordination,

political engagement and conflict resolution experience, and membership in an international institution likely to have a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Zambia has a lengthy BRICS relationship. In 2018, Zambia hosted the annual BRICS Dialogue on “Building Responsive, Inclusive, and Collective Solutions” for emerging markets and developing countries. Zambia sought recognition as a serious multilateral participant via the Dialogue. This background led BRICS to accept Zambia as an Associate Member. Zambia's role as a vital partner in this global platform increases with this decision.

Zambia joining BRICS will boost investment. China is BRICS' biggest member and is said to be its ‘engine’. Zambia may get money from China, Brazil, India, and Russia via BRICS. China's investment and lending were considered as a solution to Zambia's debt issue by the World Bank and IMF. BRICS partners have pledged USD50 billion to infrastructure projects in member nations via the New Development Bank. This grant might improve Zambia's health, communication, transport, and water infrastructure.

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