

RUSSIA'S PROPOSAL FOR A MORE EQUITABLE AND DEMOCRATIC WORLD ORDER

Concept Note

International System at a Time of Transition

As a brief unipolar moment is over, the emergence of multiple independent centres of power, policy decision-making and economic growth has become a key reality in international relations of the 21st century paving the way for a multipolar (polycentric) world order.

This change has been triggered by breakthroughs in the political, economic, scientific and technological fields achieved over the past decades. Those transformations are now well under way.

The polycentric global development paradigm considerably expands opportunity for nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Northern Eurasia to unlock their constructive potential and enjoy mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation thus opening a pathway to a genuine justice, democracy and balance in international relations.

However, this historical transformation faces challenges as there are serious interests at play which hinder and may reverse the dynamic of polycentric development.

Against this background, timely and joint efforts should be undertaken, as step one, to ensure that the members of the international community re-commit to the UN Charter principles in their entirety and interconnectedness. Those principles must serve as a basis for peaceful co-existence and cooperation.

As step two, a new global deal among nations may and should be reached on how to adapt the current architecture of international relations to better reflect the emerging polycentric realities. In advance of such imminent serious dialogue, Russia has outlined the following non-exhaustive principles with a view to a more equitable and democratic world order in the era of multipolarity.

Diversity of models for states' internal development

No development model can be regarded as exceptional or superior to others. There is no 'one-size-fits-all'. Each has its advantages. A sovereign state is free to choose, implement or change development models in line with its needs and traditions without foreign interference. Other states and groups of states need to respect this right and refrain from imposing any patterns and standards.

Differences between states and groups of states should be no obstacle to maintaining and developing equal and respectful relations among them.

Indivisible Security and Universal Interdependence

Today's world is unprecedentedly interconnected. Many challenges and threats are transboundary in nature. No state can ensure its national security on its own. All states have equal rights to ensure their security.

Thus the fundamental principle of indivisible and equitable security should be upheld. Block-oriented logic and "zero-sum game" strategies should be rejected.

That means, inter alia, that all states need to refrain from attempts to strengthen the security of one state or group of states at the expense of other states' security. Neither should they claim primary responsibility for global security, seek to play an exceptional or predominant role in ensuring it in contradiction of the prerogatives of the UN Security Council.

Jeopardizing international and regional peace and security or undermining the security of individual states should be ruled out.

Responsible Collective Leadership and Reasonable Self-Restraint of Global Powers

Multipolarity (polycentricity) as a world development paradigm for the 21st century may open a pathway to a genuine collective leadership and a meaningful reform of the global governance system, including the UN and its Security Council.

Meanwhile, the states and groups of states with the potential to greatly benefit or gravely damage the entire humanity have a special responsibility to shape a favourable international environment for security and development not just for themselves but for the rest of the world.

To this end, such actors will avoid abusing their inherent advantages, exercise reasonable self-restraint in mutual relations and in vital spheres, including responsible macroeconomic policy and rejection of unilateral sanctions, which bypass the UN Security Council.

Freedom and Democracy in International Relations

All states and groups of states are free to choose foreign partners and models of international relationship, including tools, mechanisms and institutions that suit them best.

Any attempt to undermine such sovereign choice, to dominate over states or groups of states and impose a de facto or de jure unjust model of international relationship is illegal, prone to conflict and should be ruled out. The principle of sovereign equality of states should be upheld.

International cooperation is needed to reduce and prevent the risk of domination of any state or group of states in the world affairs.

It is important to make an effort to restore the role of the UN and its bodies in harmonizing interests and actions of its member states. A meaningful reform of the UN and other global governance institutions, including financial and banking ones, which will make them more inclusive and will reflect multipolar realities, is overdue.

Such a reform should strengthen the role of the World Majority in decision making in the above-mentioned institutions and their executive bodies, thereby reducing risks of any state or groups of states exercising control over them.

Just as necessary and pressing is a timely development of alternative tools, mechanisms and institutions of cooperation and integration on global, regional and subregional levels.

Cooperation Based on Equality of Rights, Balance of Interests and Mutual Benefit

International and multilateral cooperation is a driving force for prosperity, sustainable development and enhanced security, while a shortage thereof has the opposite effect.

Solidarity, mutual trust and recognition of the equality of states, their rights and interests will maximize the benefits of international and multilateral cooperation.

States should explore ways to overcome distrust, build confidence and align interests through dialogue and compromise.

Rule of Law in International Relations

The UN Charter and other instruments of international law are at the core of the system of international relations and their role should be strengthened, while double standards should be rejected.

Uniform interpretation and effective implementation of the international law should be upheld. Progressive development of the international law should take into account interests of all states.

States and groups of states need to support efforts aimed at making clear and just universal international legal tools, which should be binding on all members of the international community.

Humanization of International Relations

It is important to strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of international relations. This may prevent humankind from losing its traditional spiritual and moral compass, save it from the risk of self-destruction, facilitate greater mutual understanding and trust among nations and civilizations, promote conflict-free and harmonious world development while preserving our common heritage of cultural and civilizational diversity.

There is a need to launch a broad international dialogue to identify and agree on elements of universal human morality common to Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and other religions as well as secular ethics systems. The results of such a dialogue may become an authoritative guidance for actions of all states and international organizations.

BRICS as a Pillar of a More Equitable and Democratic World Order

BRICS is a proper platform for discussion on how to adapt the architecture of international relations to better reflect the emerging multipolar (polycentric) realities.

BRICS is the only platform where the majority of the independent centres of power of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Northern Eurasia are represented on an equal footing and have the opportunity to talk in a constructive atmosphere.

BRICS is an example of how diverse states can address issues of common interest and develop mutually beneficial solutions rooted in the principles and purposes of the UN Charter in their entirety and interconnectedness.

Patterns and mechanisms of cooperation developed by BRICS in various areas may serve as an inspiring model for international relations in the era of multipolarity.

Regular BRICS Plus/Outreach Dialogues allow BRICS to take into account interests of the World Majority as a whole.

BRICS' shared vision for the 21st century world order should serve as a contribution to the global governance transition.