

Russia's Inroads into Africa - Buoyant National Economy. The Unstoppable March of the Global South

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

Russia by all standards is probably the most "sanctioned" country by the west. But her economy keeps growing faster than any western economy. A normal thinker would say, there is something wrong.

Since the Russian Special Operation (SO) in Ukraine, the Russian economy has repeatedly defied expectations. The current forecast for 2024 is a 4% growth, compared to 2.7% for the US (Conference Board estimate), and 0.7% for the European Union - EU (European Central Bank estimated). Yet, these two western economic blocks have tightened sanctions on Russia on every occasion.

Overall unemployment in Russia is estimated by end 2024 at 2.6%, quite low if compared to the US (4.2%) and Europe (6.3%).

Outside of the war industry, Russia has specialized labor shortages which she needs to cover with focused labor import.

Western prediction for Russia in 2025 is what they call a "soft landing", a growth down to 2.5% to 3%.

These forecasters, however, conveniently, look only at the *status quo*, as if the current economic structural trends would continue without a change.

What the west does not consider is the rapid transformation of the Global South, which goes way beyond the expanded BRICS. It looks like the Global South, finally and more than six decades after the so-called "independence" from her western colonizers, mainly France and the UK, but also Portugal and Spain, are coming to grips with their own real freedom; freedom to choose with whom to do business and establish diplomatic, trade and investment relations.

This "freedom process" has been helped over the past few years by Russia and China, i.e. the strengthening of the BRICS and BRICS associates.

As the title says, ***the Global South is on an unstoppable march towards their sovereign autonomy.***

Associating and aligning with countries that never exploited them - never colonized them - and are ready for honest trading with them, plus, providing them with economic

development assistance, so they eventually become fully independent, no longer in a neocolonial bind, as has been particularly the case with the 14 former West and Central African French colonies (*West Arica*: Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Guinea; *Central Africa*: Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, and Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Africa).

African-Russian relations have surged forward in 2024 and this trend is continuing, despite any possible interference by the West.

Africa has still an estimated 60% of all non-renewable natural resources, including rare earths - which the west covets mainly for its war industry and keeps exploiting; for example, in the Congo and the Central African Republic (CAR), much of it with child labor under horrendous human rights violating conditions.

The BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia on 22-24 October 2024 was the highlight for further expanding Russia-Global South relations. The conference, hosted by Russia who holds the rotating BRICS Presidency in 2024, introduced several innovations, not least the concept of a BRICS 'partner' framework, consisting of BRICS partners or associate nations. Their status is that of a likely precursor to becoming a full-fledged BRICS member. Several countries, including Uganda and Algeria, were invited to become 'partners'.

Partners or associates can trade with BRICS countries, tax-free and in their local currencies. They also have access to the BRICS Bank, the *New Development Bank* (NDB). This will allow them diversifying their funding sources, no longer solely depending on the western banking system.

Algeria, one of Africa's largest economies, another BRICS partner, can make a significant contribution to the bank's capital, becoming not only a recipient of funds but also a donor.

These new economic cooperation opportunities not only allow BRICS and associates to expand their local economies, but the new conditions have a spill-over effect to other Global South countries, possibly future BRICS or BRICS partners. This Russian-sponsored Africa cooperation initiative has an almost unlimited potential for alleviating poverty and improving the lives of African citizens across the Continent.

Case in point: Ethiopia, a new BRICS member (since 1 January 2024), has a chance to attract more investment in infrastructure, industry, and agriculture through the NDB, while gaining access to the markets of other member or partner countries.

Beyond the BRICS and BRICS partners, a significant political milestone in Russia-Africa relations was the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum held on 9 -10 November 2024 and attended by over 40 ministers from various African nations in the Sirius Federal territory. More than 1,500 participants have attended.

The event was also attended by the leadership of the African Union.

The talks were headed by Russian **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov**, adopting agreements and resolutions that reflect a shared perspective between Moscow and African nations on crucial global and bilateral issues. Moscow confirmed that such conferences may take place regularly, in Africa rather than in Russia. See this from [Tass for more details](#).

Another important highlight was Lavrov's African tour. In May / June 2024, the Russian foreign minister visited the Sahel region (Guinea, Burkina Faso, Chad) as well as the Republic of the Congo.

Central Africa and western Africa have been considered as France's sphere of influence for decades. Lavrov emphasized that Russia's relations with Chad are not directed against other countries. Interestingly, Lavrov added,

"I can guarantee you that our friendship with Chad will not affect our relations with France in any way. France has other approaches; it proceeds from the fact that either you are with us or you are against us."

In November 2024, during the Ministerial Conference, an **Investment Support Fund** was established. The fund may become operational as early as next year, and aims at co-financing energy and mining projects initiated by Russian companies on the African continent.

Russia anticipates that the total volume of public and private investments into the economy of African countries would be at least \$2 billion. Public funds would act as a catalyst for private investments.

For more details, see [this](#).

The political will of African nations to belong to this growing new mega-association called Global South - under the guidance and sponsorship of Russia and China - is growing.

Russian-African interaction on different levels has become an integral part of building a new world architecture, one that is based on Peace and cooperation, as well as joint decision-making and mutual benefits.

It is also one good reason why western sanctions cannot demolish Russia. To the contrary, with these illegal sanctions the west is cementing their own grave and helping building new closer relations between Russia-China and the Global South; and specially, between Russia and Africa - the creation of a new international economic framework.

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