

Brics to more than double with admission of six new countries

Major expansion as economic bloc that includes Russia and China attempts to provide counterweight to the US and western allies

The Brics group of big emerging economies has announced the admission of six new members, in an attempt to reshape the global world order and provide a counterweight to the US and its allies.

From the beginning of next year, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Argentina, the UAE and Ethiopia will join the current five members – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – it was announced at a summit in Johannesburg on Thursday.

China's president, Xi Jinping, described the expansion as "historic". He had been the leading proponent of the admission of new members, presenting an enlarged Brics as a way for the global south to have a stronger voice in world affairs.

It is unclear, however, how the expansion would significantly enhance the group's clout on the global stage. That would depend on how far it will be able to act in unison, analysts said, and the group of new members has made it even more disparate, a mix of powerful autocracies with middle-income and developing democracies.

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