

OUR OPINION, THEIR OPINION

"The goal of social justice and all round development can't be achieved through ideas but actions."
Mchiel Albert

Confusing G-7 Summit

Was G7 summit in Canada a failure one? The question is doing rounds everywhere and not without reasons. failed At 50, the G-7 - a grouping of the most advanced economies - should appear robust, cohesive and experienced in managing global conflict. Instead, the G-7 Summit and Outreach session in Kananaskis, Canada presented a disunited and ineffective force in the face of some of the most testing conflicts including an escalating Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Iran strife and Israel's ceaseless bombardment of Gaza. In addition, it has been unable to deal with the biggest disruptor in global trade - that of the U.S. Trump administration's reciprocal tariffs worldwide. This year's G-7 was rocky from the start as host Canada saw an unexpected election just months before the summit. The government of Mark Carney was still finding its feet, which meant leaders such as Prime Minister Modi were invited just days before the summit. Upheavals in U.S. foreign and trade policy have also caught the grouping offguard: U.S. President Donald Trump's pivot to Russia on the Ukraine crisis, and ambiguous approach to China have been particularly noted. In Kananaskis Mr. Trump even suggested that the G-7 become the "G9, including Russia and China", much to the chagrin of other leaders, including the Ukraine President, who was a special invitee. Mr. Trump's volte face from proclaiming to be a "Peace-time President" to actively supporting Israel's aggression was another issue. The U.S. refused to sign on to a draft statement by G-7 members that called for a de-escalation or any criticism of Israel, and pushed for a statement that condemned Iran. Mr. Trump's early exit dealt another blow. Eventually, the G-7 was unable to issue a joint statement on key issues, and a Chair's Summary was issued to deal with the crises at hand, along with statements on less divisive issues such as AI and quantum computing, critical minerals supply chains, wildfire and prevention, an transnational repression, but not on terrorism, as India had hoped. Perhaps the most productive part of Mr. Modi's trip was his meeting with Mr. Carney, and the decisions to restore Indian and Canadian High Commissioners, and to reset ties ruptured over the Nijjar case. However, the Carney government has not demonstrated any change in its position on the case or on action against Khalistani extremism. Moreover, the G-7 statement on Transnational Repression (TNR) does not name any country, but is pointed in its reference to allegations of foreign interference and TNR made by Canada against India, as well as China, Russia and Iran. Given the outcomes, the government must review the utility of India's participation in the G-7 process. To have the Prime Minister travel more than 11,000 kilometres to address one outreach session of a fractious summit may not be the most optimal use of India's resources.

BRICS+ growth agenda for Global South

In the face of a fragmenting global economy, Brazil's BRICS+ presidency offers a historic opportunity to develop a model of cooperation attuned to the Global South's development needs. Time, all recognise the value of policy coordination

On July 6-7, Rio de Janeiro will host the BRICS+ Summit of presidents and heads of state. With ten current member states and many others seeking to join, the BRICS+ brings together countries with diverse political, cultural, and civilizational outlooks, but which share a commitment to fostering South-South cooperation and pursuing a more equitable, multipolar global order. Such efforts are needed more than ever because climate-change mitigation and adaptation cannot be separated from socio-economic development. From a production standpoint, responding to such a complex, multifaceted challenge requires integration into higher rungs of the value chain, through strategies underpinned by strong sustainability principles. In practice, that means adopting policies to incentivise energy-efficient production methods and an expansion into higher value-added industrial outputs. But industrial decarbonization depends on knowledge-intensive sectors and technologies, and investments in these areas do not arise organically from market dynamics. They require political will, strategic planning, a risk appetite for long-duration projects, and – crucially – increased productivity through the more efficient use of natural resources. Such an agenda demands empowered states; it calls for a strategic mobilisation of public institutions that can operate with relative independence from fiscal constraints. In this context, the BRICS+ should focus on identifying complementarities across strategic sectors and activities, so that member states can drive innovation and strengthen their international competitiveness without undermining each other. Initiatives such as the Partnership for the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) represent important steps in this direction. But moving beyond dialogue is essential. To translate commit-

ments into concrete action, policymakers must engage a broader coalition of stakeholders – including companies, civil society, trade unions, and academia – to co-develop policies, guiding principles, and common standards. Creating shared value among businesses and communities not only strengthens relationships but also enhances sustainability and those businesses' reputations. This, in turn, fosters greater public acceptance and reduces the potential for resistance or conflict. Specifically, new investments could require labour safeguards such as fair working conditions, the prohibition of child and forced labour, and protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, all in accordance with international agreements and national legislation. Additionally, safeguards promoting gender equality and the elimination of racial discrimination would support a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of sustainability, informed by the perspectives of the Global South. Finance is another critical pillar. Here, the discussion should be led by members' stateowned financial institutions, since these are best positioned to direct capital to strategic sectors and coordinate their efforts with private investors. BRICS+ countries already have dozens of public development banks and sovereign wealth funds with patient-investment (long-term) mandates, technical expertise, and demonstrable experience in supporting structural change and sustainable development initiatives. These institutions offer fertile ground for further cooperation, particularly through innovative financial instruments that could strengthen the role of the New Development Bank. Importantly, public development banks and sovereign wealth funds must go beyond merely correcting market failures. They should serve as early-stage investors to catalyse the necessary structural transformation, including by attaching social and

environmental conditionalities to their investment frameworks to influence private decisions across the value chain. For example, a company could be required to share its technology and knowledge to receive public financing. That is how the state can foster new markets and ensure that public support contributes to building more inclusive and sustainable economic models. With clear short, medium, and long-term targets – like the BRICS+'s goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 – public programs to direct resources toward specific sectors would naturally enhance coordination. Each member state will need to adopt policies to target sectors that are ripe for productivity and efficiency enhancements. Input-output dynamics can be shaped through a number of channels, including effective demand, derisking mechanisms, reduced unit production costs, and measures to encourage private investment, including through public procurement. The value chains for critical minerals and energy bio-inputs (such as sustainable aviation fuel) are two such sectors. Countries like Brazil have already made advances in these domains and are in a position to share some technologies and expertise in exchange for strategic financing. An effective BRICS+ development agenda will require a coordinated mobilisation of resources and institutional efforts, with the state playing a central role in steering the overall strategy. More than just an investor or financier, the public sector is uniquely positioned to anchor private expectations in an increasingly uncertain world. Brazil's BRICS+ presidency, which comes at a time of rising protectionism and global economic fragmentation, offers a historic opportunity to advance a model of cooperation attuned to the Global South's economic realities and development imperatives.

BY-FERNANDO AMORIM TEIXEIRA

New special tribunal to investigate Russia Ukraine war

Earlier this year, the European Union, the Council of Europe, Ukraine and an international coalition of states agreed to establish a new special tribunal. The tribunal will eventually be tasked with holding Russia accountable for the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It's expected to start operating in 2026. Human rights organisations, international lawyers and some (mostly European) states have long been calling for the establishment of such a tribunal. Oleksandra Matviichuk, a Ukrainian human rights lawyer, called the establishment of the tribunal: an important breakthrough for the international justice community and especially for the millions of Ukrainians who have been harmed by the Russian aggression. However, important questions remain about if it could truly hold senior Russian officials accountable. So, how will this new special tribunal work, and will it be effective – or necessary? How does the special tribunal fill the gaps left by the ICC and ICJ? This tribunal is separate to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICC can prosecute individuals charged with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Russian war on Ukraine. So far, it has issued arrest warrants against four Russian senior officials, including President Vladimir Putin. Because Russia is not a member state to the court, the court can't exercise legal authority over what's known in international law as a crime of aggression (when leaders of a state launch or plan a war). For the ICC to be able to exercise this jurisdiction, the aggressor state also must be a member state of the court. The ICJ is a different court altogether. It primarily deals with and adjudicates disputes between states, not limited to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It can't hold individuals accountable, and can only exercise jurisdiction over a dispute if both states to a dispute agree. While the ICC seeks to establish individual criminal responsibility, the ICJ may establish state responsibility for a violation of international law. Currently, there are also two cases between Ukraine and Russia before the ICJ. Neither deals with the question of the legality of Russia's use of force in its invasion in February 2022. Both Ukraine and Russia would need to consent to bring this issue before the court. So, is a new tribunal necessary? Yes, because the crime of aggression currently can't be addressed by any other international court or tribunal. Given the limitations of what the ICJ and ICC can do, a dedicated tribunal seems the obvious solution to hold those responsible for the illegal use of force against Ukraine accountable. And it's not uncommon for specialised tribunals with limited jurisdiction over a specific situation to be created. Other historical examples include the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Given the ICC's lack of jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, the new special tribunal would complement the court's existing investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity. Who is running the new tribunal and how will it work? The exact content and specifics of this new tribunal will remain unknown until the draft statute of the tribunal is published. That's a document that outlines details including the tribunal's jurisdiction, the applicable definition of aggression and how the tribunal will function. At this stage, the Council of Europe has confirmed the tribunal will work within its legal framework and principles. It will be funded by an international coalition of supportive states. A management committee of members and associate members of the tribunal will be responsible for the election of the tribunal's judges and prosecutors. The management committee is made up of the Council of Europe's council of ministers and Ukraine. Diplomatic discussions are still ongoing at this point, but the legal process for establishing the special tribunal can begin now. Will this special tribunal be more effective? Political, legal and practical challenges for the special tribunal remain. It's unclear if the most senior Russian state officials can and will be able to be brought to trial for the crime of aggression. Nothing, so far, suggests the statute of the tribunal will contain an exception to state immunity enjoyed by heads of state, heads of governments and foreign ministers while in power.

By-Yvonne Breitwieser

Italy launches Europe's new vision for African nations

This triangle-- Rome, Brussels and the Gulf - has the potential to form a multi-level potential to form a powerful multi-level coalition with African stakeholders. Italy formally launched a new chapter of its Mattei Plan for Africa — no longer just a national initiative but now aligned with the European Union's Global Gateway strategy and projected onto a truly global scale. Co-hosted by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome, the summit marked the Plan's internationalization: a pivot toward multilateral cooperation, new partnerships, and a more strategic presence in the global development landscape.

Meloni, speaking before African and European leaders, framed the event as a milestone in what she called a "pact among free nations that believe in dignity". She stressed that the Mattei Plan is not a top-down aid programme but a platform for "cooperation among equals". This ethos — mutual respect and partnership — recalls the legacy of Enrico Mattei, the visionary postwar energy leader for whom the Plan is named. But what's unfolding now is far more ambitious than its symbolic roots. As Meloni stated bluntly, "Africa

is the continent where our future is being shaped," and the goal is to embed Italy's vision within broader international structures. Ursula von der Leyen echoed that sentiment, calling the Global Gateway and the Mattei Plan "collective efforts designed to tackle common challenges and seize shared opportunities". Together, Rome and Brussels are not just aligning agendas but offering an alternative model for engagement in Africa — one focused on transparency, sustainability, and co-development.

The summit featured not only political rhetoric but also tangible commitments. Italy and the EU pledged to convert €235 millions of African debt into locally targetted development projects, alongside broader restructuring packages totaling €1.2 billion. These measures are designed to boost African resilience without increasing dependency. At the same time, the Italian government announced a major investment in the Lobito Corridor — a trans-African infrastructure project linking Angola and Zambia — via a \$270 million loan and a \$50 million equity stake. The project is supported by Italy's Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, SACE, and the Africa Finance Corporation, in coordination with the US-led Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.



Italy's geographic and geopolitical positioning gives it a special role in this emerging order. The country is not only an anchor for EU-African ties but a natural terminal for the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC), which is increasingly being linked to the Mattei Plan. IMEC provides physical infrastructure — ports, railways, digital and energy links — while the Mattei Plan contributes the social and human capital: vocational training, healthcare development, technical education, and local governance. Together, they form a complementary strategy for connectivity and development, countering the influence of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which many critics view as opaque and debt heavy.

The digital dimension of this strategy is also growing. At the summit, Italy announced support for the Blue Raman sub-

marine cable project, which will link Europe, the Middle East, and India. Complementing this is the launch of the AI Hub for Sustainable Development at the UNDP office in Rome, a flagship initiative of Italy's G7 presidency. The hub aims to support up to 500,000 African startups over the next three years by integrating artificial intelligence into UN development frameworks. Backed by G7 partners and major Western tech companies, the project positions Rome as a key player in Africa's digital future. This pivot to Africa is not occurring in a vacuum. With China's footprint on the continent expanding rapidly — often in ways that sideline transparency and sustainability — the Mattei Plan is meant to offer a credible and values-based alternative. Italy's outreach has also been bolstered by growing support from Gulf countries, reflected in the joint

backing of Sidi Ould Tah, a candidate from the Gulf region for president of the African Development Bank. This triangle — Rome, Brussels, and the Gulf — has the potential to form a powerful, multi-level coalition with African stakeholders.

As Meloni emphasised, the Mattei Plan is "not a spot initiative", but a long-term commitment. Follow-up steps are already in motion: she will travel to Addis Ababa in July, and African leaders will return to Rome for another summit in the fall. But the challenge now is less about vision than execution. Can this mosaic of initiatives — from corridors and AI hubs to debt restructuring — be translated into lasting governance structures and credible development outcomes?

African leaders present in Rome offered cautious optimism. They recognised that the governance architecture being shaped appears solid but emphasised that it must be matched with adequate financial tools and geopolitical coherence. In their view, Africa is not just a battleground for influence — it must become a space for shared construction, a future defined not by dependency but by co-authorship.

With today's summit, Italy has declared its intention to help write that future. Now it must follow through

By- Vas Shenoyi