

## **IN FOCUS**

### **India's 2026 BRICS Presidency: Building Resilient and Equitable Health Systems**

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As India prepares to take on the BRICS presidency in 2026, health cooperation has become a central theme for the ten member nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia. Together, these countries represent almost half of the world's population and a growing share of the global economy. The upcoming summit offers an opportunity to turn common challenges such as pandemics, inequality, and weak supply chains into collective progress for the Global South.

Over time, BRICS has evolved from a group focused mainly on economics into a partnership that supports global health and development. The 2025 Durban Declaration renewed the bloc's commitment to Universal Health Coverage, pandemic preparedness, and the One Health approach. It also stressed the need to strengthen local production of medicines and to use digital technologies to improve access to care. These goals align closely with national and regional priorities for India, which plays a leading role in digital public infrastructure and affordable healthcare.

Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the most urgent public health issues across BRICS+ countries. Together, they account for nearly half of all TB cases worldwide. India's Nikshay digital platform and the PM TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan show how technology and community partnerships can support TB elimination. The Durban Declaration also highlighted the need to expand the BRICS TB Research Network to promote innovation in diagnostics, treatment, and surveillance.

The group is also focusing more on the social conditions that shape health outcomes. Factors such as poverty, gender inequality, housing, and work-related risks increase vulnerability to both infectious and chronic diseases. During India's presidency, the proposed BRICS Platform on Socially Determined Health could support joint research, policy alignment, and the creation of a Health Equity Index to measure progress.

India can help connect digital innovation with social well-being. Through the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the eSanjeevani telemedicine network, it has shown how technology can make health services more accessible and efficient. These experiences can help other BRICS+ members build secure, interoperable digital systems. The path ahead is clear.

BRICS must continue to strengthen disease surveillance, support vaccine and medicine production, and invest in the health workforce. The countries also need to share knowledge and data more effectively and ensure that growth is accompanied by equitable access to healthcare. India's 2026 presidency offers a chance to align technological progress with social inclusion. A people-focused BRICS health agenda will not only strengthen the resilience of member nations but also enhance the collective ability of the Global South to build a fairer and healthier world.