

# BRICS+ Health Declaration Signals Commitment to Equity, But There's Room to Accelerate Progress

The adoption of the [2025 declaration](#) by BRICS Health Ministers reflects an alignment on advancing health equity, regional solidarity, and resilient health systems across the Global South. A key recommendation of the declaration is the establishment of the *Partnership for the Elimination of Socially Determined Diseases (SDDs)*, expected to be formally endorsed at the upcoming Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro. While trade, security, and geopolitics will likely dominate the agenda, the health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents (WCAH) should not be overlooked.

In 2023, approximately [one woman died every two minutes](#) from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, while an estimated 4.8 million children under the age of five died—most from preventable causes. Several countries within the expanded BRICS+ grouping, including Nigeria, India, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Egypt, account for a significant share of this global burden. In some member states, adolescents face intersecting challenges such as limited access to healthcare, gender-based violence, and early marriage—factors that constrain individual potential and hinder national development.

These health challenges stand in stark contrast to the economic promise of the BRICS+ bloc. Representing a substantial proportion of the world's population and accounting for [40%](#) of the world's GDP with projections rising to 41% in 2025 – BRICS+ nations are well-positioned to shape the future economic landscape. Yet systemic gaps in WCAH outcomes threaten to undermine this trajectory. Preventable maternal mortality, childhood malnutrition, and barriers to adolescent health and education weaken the foundation for long-term, inclusive growth.

Evidence suggests that investments in reproductive, maternal, and child health can yield returns of up to [\\$20 for every dollar spent](#), highlighting the economic imperative of addressing these gaps. Failure to prioritize WCAH risks eroding human capital and diminishing the demographic dividend many BRICS+ countries could otherwise harness.

The forthcoming endorsement of the *Partnership for the Elimination of SDDs* presents an opportunity to center WCAH within regional cooperation. With scalable investment pathways such as the New Development Bank and joint procurement platforms, it reflects a shared commitment to addressing SDDs through coordinated, cross-sectoral action.

To fully realize this potential, civil society and the private sector must work hand in hand with governments to ensure WCAH is prioritized as a core component of the SDD agenda. Proven models already implemented by some BRICS nations—such as Brazil’s Healthy Brazil program focused on improving the health of socially vulnerable populations, Ethiopia’s Health Extension Program that has improved maternal and newborn outcomes in remote areas, and South Africa’s ward-based outreach teams delivering care to vulnerable communities—demonstrate how this collaborative approach can help build resilient primary healthcare systems, close persistent equity gaps, and deliver transformative health outcomes.

As BRICS+ assumes a more prominent role in shaping global governance, its leadership will be measured not only by economic and geopolitical clout but also by its commitment to inclusive development. Its credibility will hinge on placing human capital—particularly the lives of women, children, and adolescents—at the core of its development agenda. The health and dignity of women, children, and adolescents remain a litmus test for equitable progress.