

Media Statement on Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/ International Relations

September 27, 2018

1. The BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations held their annual meeting on the margins of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA73) on 27 September 2018, chaired by Brazil in the country's capacity as the incoming BRICS Chair for 2019. They exchanged views on current issues of global significance in political, security, economic, financial and sustainable development spheres, as well as three-pillar intra-BRICS strategic cooperation. The Ministers expressed their warm appreciation to South Africa for the success of the 10th BRICS Summit, Johannesburg, 25-27 July 2018, held under the theme: "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution". They also welcomed the convening of BRICS Leaders Retreat in Johannesburg that marked the 10th anniversary of the BRICS Summits. The Ministers recommitted to implement the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit, as well as of the past Summits.
2. The Ministers also welcomed the hosting of the BRICS-Africa Outreach and second BRICS Plus Cooperation with Emerging Markets and Developing Countries (EMDCs) during the Johannesburg Summit. .
3. The Ministers underlined the progress achieved by BRICS throughout more than one decade of multi-dimensional, inclusive cooperation fostered by the Leaders' Summits. They expressed satisfaction with the many fruitful results of intra-BRICS cooperation in the areas of economy, finance, peace, stability and people-to-people exchanges, in particular the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), including its Africa Regional Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), the formulation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership, BRICS Action Agenda on Economic and Trade Cooperation and the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform (ARP). They welcomed the constitution of the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, the upcoming establishment of the Americas Regional Office of the NDB in São Paulo, the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR), and the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre. The Ministers looked forward to the early and full operationalization of all BRICS initiatives. .
4. The Ministers recalled the importance of the political and security cooperation, including through Meetings of Foreign Ministers, Meetings of BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues and National Security Advisors. .
5. The Ministers recommitted themselves to a world of peace and stability, and supported the central role of the United Nations, the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and respect for international law, promoting democracy and the rule of law. They recalled in this regard the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States. The Ministers reinforced their commitment to upholding multilateralism and to working together on the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as they foster a more representative, democratic, equitable, fair and just international political and economic order. Faced with international challenges requiring their cooperative efforts, they reiterated their commitment to shaping a more fair, just and representative multipolar international order to the shared benefit of humanity, in which the general prohibition of the use of force is fully upheld and which excludes the imposition of unilateral coercive measures outside the framework of the UN Charter. They emphasised the indivisible nature of peace and security and reiterated that no country should enhance its security at the expense of the security of others. They noted the long overdue outstanding task of ensuring the adequate representation of African States in the UN, especially in peace and security matters. .
6. The Ministers welcomed the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, held in the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2018, to commemorate the birth centenary and the life of Nelson Mandela. They welcomed the Political Declaration adopted by Leaders, which reaffirms the values Nelson Mandela stood for and commits Member States to redouble their efforts to build a just, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and fair world. They noted that Nelson Mandela embodied the very values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and supported by all BRICS members. .
7. They recalled the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of the developing countries so that it can adequately respond to global challenges. China and Russia reiterated the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and supported their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.
8. The Ministers underscored the importance of sustained efforts aimed at making the United Nations more effective and efficient in implementing the mandates conferred upon it. In this regard, they committed to intensifying dialogue amongst the BRICS countries on the administration and budget of the United Nations, with a view to strengthening the Organization and preserving its Member State-driven character. The Ministers expressed their support for continued cooperation of BRICS members in areas of mutual interest including through regular exchanges amongst their Permanent Missions to multilateral organisations.
9. The Ministers underscored that the elements of the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments of the United Nations are not negotiable, except the current maximum assessment rate, which is contrary to the principle of the capacity to pay and is a fundamental source of distortion in the scale of assessments.

10. The Ministers reiterated BRICS commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order and in this regard reaffirmed the centrality of UN, WTO and international law. The Ministers pledged their support to efforts towards making global governance more representative with greater participation of emerging markets and developing countries in global decision making.
11. The Ministers emphasized the importance of an open and inclusive world economy enabling all countries and peoples to share the benefits of globalization. They underlined their firm commitment to free trade, and the centrality of a rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO. They opposed the new wave of protectionism and the systematic impact of unilateral measures that are incompatible with WTO rules, and undermine global trade, and economic growth. In this regard, they reiterated that the WTO Dispute Settlement System is a cornerstone of the MTS as it is designed to enhance security and predictability in international trade.
12. Reaffirming their support for the realisation of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Ministers commended African countries and the African Union on the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The massive adhesion of African nations to the AfCFTA, as well as the adoption of the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market, represent major steps towards the effective economic integration of the continent, as they contribute to reducing external dependency and to increasing Africa's political and economic leverage.
13. The Ministers emphasized the need to continue to work together in the areas of disarmament, nonproliferation, prevention of an arms race in outer space and countering challenges to the international security and stability through political and diplomatic means.
14. The Ministers deplored the continued terrorist attacks, including in some BRICS countries. They condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations wherever committed and by whomsoever. They urged concerted efforts to counter terrorism under the UN auspices on a firm international legal basis, and expressed their conviction that a comprehensive approach was necessary to ensure effective fight against terrorism. They recalled the responsibility of all States to prevent financing of terrorist networks and terrorist actions from their territories. The Ministers highly valued the 3rd BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group Meeting held in Nelspruit on 19 and 20 April 2018. They called upon for an expedited adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UN General Assembly. To address the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, they supported and emphasised the need for launching multilateral negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, including at the Conference on Disarmament.
15. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to support international cooperation in combating illicit financial flows, including cooperation within Financial Actions Task Force (FATF) and World Customs Organisation. In this regard, they underscored the importance of increasing mutual exchanges and data sharing. They emphasised the importance of upholding and supporting the objectives of FATF and to intensify their cooperation to implement and improve its Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation in FATF.
16. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the elaboration under the UN auspices of rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States on ensuring security in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
17. The Ministers expressed their concern over the growth of criminal misuse of ICTs and in this regard reiterated the need to develop an international universal legally binding instrument on combatting criminal use of ICTs within the UN. The Ministers acknowledged the work to promote cooperation according to the BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on Ensuring Security in the Use of ICTs or any other mutually agreed mechanism. The Ministers also acknowledged the importance to establish a framework of cooperation among BRICS Member States on ensuring security in the use of ICTs and, in this regard, BRICS Member States will work towards consideration and elaboration of a BRICS intergovernmental agreement on cooperation on this matter.
18. The Ministers agreed that the conflicts elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa should not be used to delay resolution of long-standing conflicts, in particular the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They reiterated the need for renewed diplomatic efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and previous agreements between the parties, through negotiations with a view to creating an independent, viable, territorially contiguous Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. They reiterated that the status of Jerusalem is one of the final status issues to be defined in the context of negotiations between Israel and Palestine. With regard to the situation in Gaza, they reiterated their support to the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/ES-10/20) on the protection of the Palestinian population and called for its full implementation.
19. The Ministers reiterated their support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They commended its vital role in providing health, education and other basic services for almost 5.3 million Palestinian refugees and underscore its relevance to bringing stability to the region and the need for ensuring a more adequate, sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for the Agency.
20. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment for a political resolution of the conflict in Syria, through an inclusive "Syrian-led, Syrian-owned" political process that safeguards the state sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria, in pursuance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015) and taking into account the result of the Congress of the Syrian National Dialogue in Sochi. They reiterated their support for the Geneva process and the mediation offered by the UN, as well as the Astana process which has been showing signs of positive developments on the ground, and stress the complementarity between the two initiatives. They reaffirmed their commitment to a peaceful resolution in Syria and their opposition to measures that run contrary to the UN Charter and the authority of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and that do not contribute to advancing the political process. They also highlighted the importance of unity in the fight against

terrorist organisations in Syria in full observance of the relevant UNSC Resolutions. They reiterated their strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by any party, for any purpose and under any circumstances and renewed calls for comprehensive, objective, independent, and transparent investigations of all alleged incidents. They called for enhanced efforts to provide necessary humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, bearing in mind urgent reconstruction needs.

21. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for the process of an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" national peace and reconciliation process. They expressed their concern over the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan particularly the increase in the number and intensity of terrorist-related attacks on the Afghan National Security Forces, the Government and civilians. They called on the international community to assist the government and the people of Afghanistan with the objective of working towards the realisation of peace. They also welcomed the Parliamentary elections that are scheduled to be held in October 2018 and the Presidential elections in 2019.
22. The Ministers expressed their concern over the humanitarian situation in the Republic of Yemen, which has become a major humanitarian crisis. They called upon all parties to cease hostilities with a view to the resumption of the negotiations supported by the United Nations, led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, with full respect for international law.
23. Recalling the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme the Ministers called upon all parties to fully comply with their obligations and ensure full and effective implementation of the JCPOA to promote international and regional peace and security.
24. The Ministers welcomed recent developments to achieve the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and maintain peace and stability in North East Asia. They reaffirmed the commitment for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation.
25. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to provide equitable, inclusive, open, all-round innovation-driven and sustainable development, in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner, towards the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty by 2030. They pledged their support for the important role of the United Nations, including the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in coordinating and reviewing global implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to reform the UN Development System with a view to enhancing its capability in supporting member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. They urged developed countries to honour their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments fully in time and to provide additional development resources to developing countries.
26. Regarding Climate Change, the Ministers welcomed the progress towards finalizing the Work Programme under the Paris Agreement and expressed their willingness to continue working constructively with other Parties to conclude its related negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) towards the 24th Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP24) to be held in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018. They called upon all countries to fully implement the Paris Agreement adopted under the principles of the UNFCCC including the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and urged developed countries to provide financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries to enhance their capability in mitigation and adaptation.
27. The Ministers welcomed the conclusion of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the formal consultation process of the Global Compact on Refugees, according to the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.
28. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the role of BRICS countries in global health governance, especially at the World Health Organisation and the United Nations. They welcomed the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending TB, as well as the Third UN High-Level meeting on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), held in New York on 26 and 27 September 2018. They underlined the importance of the creation of the BRICS Research Network on Tuberculosis (TB), which will contribute to the development of new vaccines, safe and affordable diagnostics and treatment regimes, especially for multidrug-resistant TB detection and treatment, In this regard, they welcomed the World Health Organization First Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB in the Sustainable Development Era: A Multisectoral Response, held in Moscow on 16 and 17 November 2017. These initiatives demonstrate that there is great potential for advancing joint cooperation projects on other health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, among BRICS countries.
29. The Ministers recognized the critical importance of affordable medicines, including generics, in scaling up access to affordable multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis treatment. The Ministers also reaffirmed the right to use, to the fullest extent, the provisions contained in the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) as amended, and the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health which recognises that intellectual property rights should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of the right of Member States to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all.
30. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of BRICS people-to-people exchanges in promoting common development and enhancing mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation amongst its peoples. They commended the ongoing exchanges and the steady progress in BRICS, including in the fields of sports, youth, films, culture, education, tourism and governance. They supported further BRICS people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in fostering a meaningful resonance of the BRICS partnership amongst its peoples.
31. The Ministers discussed the possibilities for the mutual support of their initiatives at the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly.

32. The Ministers were also briefed on approaches for Brazil's incoming BRICS Chairpersonship in 2019. South Africa, Russia, India and China extended full support for Brazil in hosting the Eleventh BRICS Summit in 2019.

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