



New Delhi Statement on Water

First Meeting of BRICS Water Ministers

New Delhi, India, November 18, 2021

I. Preamble

1. We, the representatives of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa participated in the 1st BRICS Water Ministers Meeting held virtually on November 18, 2021 under the Chairship of India to deliberate on the issues and challenges in the water sector in line with the discussions held at the 13th BRICS Summit.
2. We recognised that increasing population, industrialization and urbanization will lead to increasing demands of water for various purposes and therefore, sustainable development of water resources and their efficient management is the key to sustainable access to water and socio-economic growth. Moreover, the changing trend of climatic patterns and their growing adverse effects on the water sector call for taking suitable measures urgently. Therefore, we emphasised the need to adopt a holistic approach to address these challenges through sustainable development and management of water resources.
3. In this context, we will strive to work together on the following issues of common interest:

II. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

4. We acknowledged that adequate and timely availability of clean water is essential for sound health, food security and livelihoods and in this regard noted that numerous interventions have been rolled out under Sustainable Development Goal 6 'Clean Water and Sanitation for all by 2030'. Considering the increased importance of sanitation, hygiene and

sustainable access to clean water for developing resilience against the pandemics like the COVID-19, we welcomed the BRICS countries' continued efforts to develop programmes and strategies for achieving the SDG -6 goals.

III. Fostering Sustainable Water Resources Development

5. Recognising that water is a potent vehicle for socio-economic development and considering the fact that this precious resource faces huge temporal and spatial variation, we emphasised the need for development of sustainable strategies to meet existing and future demands. We acknowledged the role of water resources projects in attaining food security, energy requirement, flood moderation, drinking water & sanitation needs. Especially large water storage and associated conveyance projects have assumed greater significance keeping in view of temporal and spatial variation in climatic conditions.
6. Taking cognizance of the role of the vital ecosystem for the sustenance of life and the sustainability of water resources and in view of the limited precipitation days, we concluded that it is imperative to develop adequate storage to meet the environmental flow and various other needs throughout the year. We emphasised sustainable development, despite the socio-economic challenges of BRICS nations. We committed ourselves to strengthen the capacity of government agencies and other stakeholders in management of natural resources and inter-sectoral coordination to promote sustainable development. To achieve the said objectives, BRICS countries agreed to encourage collaborations between officials, academia, industries, civil society and other stakeholders.

IV. Resilient Water Resources Management

7. We underlined the need for an adequate, reliable, clean, accessible, acceptable and safe drinking water supply towards improving living standards and a healthy ecosystem. Considering that the water resources are finite and also the widening gap between the demand and supply of clean and safe water, we emphasised on demand-side management of

water resources through appropriate water management tools like Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), Water Energy Food (WEF) Nexus Approach, Participatory Approach, Public-Private Participation (PPP), Water Auditing and Benchmarking, Water Accounting/Budgeting etc. with focus on increasing Water Use Efficiency (WUE).

8. Recognising the importance of water conservation in water-stressed situations faced by the BRICS countries, we called for appropriate measures to be taken for supply side augmentation such as rainwater harvesting, artificial recharge to groundwater, protection, rejuvenation and restoration of water bodies, aquifer management, community participation, safe recycle and reuse of wastewater, micro-irrigation etc.
9. We emphasised the need for modelling both water resources availability and demand for various plausible scenarios for crucial decision making and overall management of water resources through the available state-of-the-art tools and technologies.

V. Mitigation and Adaptation of Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources

10. We expressed concern on impacts of climate change in many ways such as extreme precipitation with huge temporal and spatial variation, frequent occurrences of floods and droughts, rising sea level, glacial melting etc. and called upon an urgent need for adoption of a climate-resilient water management approaches. We emphasised the need to assess the impact of climate change on water resources and adopt a holistic approach for mitigation and adaptation, particularly in the context of the poor and marginalised communities. We emphasised the increased focus on water supply augmentation, management of extreme events such as floods and droughts, demand management, enabling institutional arrangement, policies, adequate financing and adoption of national level action plans/missions/ polices/ programmes/ schemes to address various issues and challenges associated with the impact of climate change on water resources.

VI. Capacity Building and Sharing Best Practices

11. We appreciated the valuable work, successful programmes, and innovations in the field of water resources by BRICS countries and we are committed to strengthen the intra-BRICS cooperation in water resources development and management, including sharing of the technical experiences, best practices, usage of state-of-the-art tools and technology and case studies of successful interventions in water resources development for mutual benefits. We encouraged convening of study tours, workshops and exposure visits for the delegations of BRICS countries to the rotating BRICS chair country for building stronger partnership and mutual benefits in the field of water resources development and management.

VII. Concluding Remarks

12. We reiterated the importance of management of water resources in a holistic manner for the development of a nation. However, water being scarce, complex, multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder resource, poses numerous challenges in its management. Therefore, there is a need for collaboration and knowledge sharing in the field of water resources. We hoped that this new beginning will be a strong foundation for all future endeavours for cooperation in water management. We resolved to continue to focus our attention on the precious water resources and further explore ways and means to intensify cooperation in water management among BRICS countries.
