



## **Welcome Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations**

**1 June 2021**

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

With your permission I would like to begin the meeting today. I welcome you all to the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting. The Covid-19 pandemic unfortunately prevents me from greeting all of you in person. It also continues to provide the larger context in which we assess the world and our policies. This is a time to reflect on its many implications. I also express my condolences for the lives lost due to this pandemic in all your countries.

Dear colleagues,

India has assumed the Chairship of the BRICS on its 15th anniversary. We have come a long way from the first time our Foreign Ministers met in New York in 2006. But the principles that guide our grouping remain consistent over the years. We strive for a fair, just, inclusive, equitable and representative multipolar international system. It is one based on international law and the UN Charter, that recognizes the sovereign equality of all States, and respects their territorial integrity while displaying mutual respect for interests and concerns of all. It is only by conducting our policies in accordance with these principles that we can expect to bring about the change we desire.

Over the years, BRICS has evolved its own unique model of engagement that is based on consensus. Our collective endeavour is also to ensure that global decision-making reflects contemporary realities. To this end, we have identified four key deliverables for our Chairship - Reform of the Multilateral System, Counter Terrorism Cooperation, Using Digital and Technological Solutions to achieve SDGs, and Enhancing People to People Cooperation. I am very happy to note that we have made substantial progress on each of these areas in the past five months with the continued cooperation and support of our partners.

Excellencies, dear colleagues, we have a packed agenda for our discussions today. I propose the agenda be adopted if there is no objection. I now look forward to hearing from each of you. I would like to give the floor first to Minister Wang Yi for his opening remarks.

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