



Inaugural Address by Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Secretary (CPV&OIA) and BRICS Sherpa at First BRICS Workshop on Digital Forensics

3 August 2021

Namaskar

1. A warm welcome to you all to this important BRICS workshop. As BRICS Sherpa for India, I have the pleasure of guiding our engagement towards the objectives defined for our Chairship year and have witnessed progress on all three pillars – political and security, economic and financial and cultural and people to people.
2. As we celebrate BRICS@15, this is our 15th anniversary, we place priority on reformed multilateralism, counter terrorism engagement, use of digital and technological means to attain SDGs and deeper people-to-people exchanges.
3. Today's workshop thus fits in with the topmost priorities of BRICS and in fact, straddles two of them- on counter terrorism and on wider use of technology. Digital forensics and CT investigation capabilities form the backbone of an effective response to the use of internet for terrorist purposes. Dealing with this key issue would involve 3 key elements – appreciation of technology, legal mechanisms and cooperation between law enforcement agencies, including within BRICS.
4. On technology: this is an area that is advancing rapidly and the terrorist has the advantage of being able to use it without legal or moral scruples. While governments are working hard, the fact remains that much of the expertise and technical knowledge rests with the private sector and there is a strong case to be made for public-private partnerships not just within member-states but across member-states. Simultaneously, the capabilities should be built up within law enforcement agencies since they are needed for the long term. The challenges that digital forensics examiners face with the increasing trend of anti-forensics techniques, especially encryption of digital evidence and usage of anonymising tech, raises the need to increase capacities in network and malware forensic areas. I recommend developing a forensic lab and a forensic manual to facilitate the investigation of online crimes including encryption of digital evidence and use of block chain technology for evidence gathering.
5. On legal mechanisms: concerted efforts are needed to address the dangers posed by terrorists and other violators in digital crime and also to adjust to the fast changing technology environment. We have to consolidate the relevant legislations under a comprehensive Act. These mechanisms will have to be forward looking and future oriented. On the one hand it should provide for more pro-active and preventive digital evidence, capacity building and



collaboration between agencies while on the other it also has to be cognizant of data security, personal liberty and democratic values. I recognise each of you have done considerable work at national level, the idea is to share best practices at BRICS level.

6. Finally, on BRICS cooperation: allow me to first congratulate you on the excellent coordination you have already achieved in the field of security and your recent agreement on the Counter-Terrorism Action Plan, which is a major deliverable of India's Chairship. Some of the areas of focus could include communication between different law enforcement agencies; inter-agency cooperation; training for CT investigations; joint initiatives; centralized repository of information/data; sharing best practices for the monitoring of certain groups and entities with suspected terrorist connections; cyber patrolling activities; and others. The establishment of formal channels of communications and nodal points will be useful.

7. I wish this Workshop great success. I hope it will build contacts, develop procedures for direct exchanges between member countries to preserve digital evidence, expedite forensic investigations and prevent gaps in communication, and strengthen existing collaboration to wipe out the scourge of terrorism through collaborative BRICS action.

[https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/34094/Inaugural Address by Sanjay Bhattacharyya Secretary CPVOIA and BRICS Sherpa at First BRICS Workshop on Digital Forensics](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/34094/Inaugural%20Address%20by%20Sanjay%20Bhattacharyya%20Secretary%20CPVOIA%20and%20BRICS%20Sherpa%20at%20First%20BRICS%20Workshop%20on%20Digital%20Forensics)
