



Media statement - Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations

1. The Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations under India's Chairmanship was held on 1 June 2021 in virtual format.
2. The Ministers reviewed progress in intra-BRICS cooperation and collaboration and exchanged views on major international and regional issues in the political, security, economic, trade, financial and sustainable development spheres.
3. Noting that 2021 marks the 15th anniversary of BRICS, they expressed support for strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation in areas of mutual interest in its three pillars - political and security, economy and finance, people-to-people and cultural exchanges.
4. The Ministers expressed grave concern over the continuing public health, societal and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. They expressed condolences for lives lost and pledged solidarity with the affected families. The Ministers emphasized the value of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among States to combat the pandemic and its impacts effectively. They called for better international preparedness to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and other current and future health challenges, including through mobilization of political support, necessary financial resources, strengthening of local production, transfer of technology, equitable and affordable access to medicines, vaccines, medical products and equipment, diagnostics and therapeutics and strengthening the resolve of citizens. Furthermore, they called for timely establishment and effective operationalization of the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre and stressed the need for further work on the proposal for BRICS Integrated Early Warning System for Preventing Mass Infectious Diseases Risks consistent with International Health Regulations in line with previous Leaders' Declarations. They supported the effort to hold a BRICS Symposium on Vaccine Cooperation.
5. The Ministers noted that the COVID-19 crisis has posed many challenges for economic and financial stability. They further emphasized the importance of delivering economic outcomes that reflect the needs and aspirations of BRICS in particular, and emerging markets and developing economies in general, especially the importance of BRICS in responding to the COVID-19 crisis through policy support and enhancing intra-BRICS and international coordination.

6. The Ministers issued a Joint Statement on Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System. The Ministers expressed support for continued cooperation of BRICS countries in areas of mutual interest, including through regular exchanges amongst their Permanent Missions to the United Nations and in other international fora.
7. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental- and reiterated that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and indivisible and must be met while leaving no one behind. The Ministers called upon the international community to foster global development partnership to address the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to accelerate the implementation of 2030 Agenda while giving special attention to the difficulties and needs of the developing countries. The Ministers urged donor countries to honour their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments and to facilitate capacity building and the transfer of technology to developing countries together with additional development resources, in line with national policy objectives of recipients.
8. The Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to implementation of Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement adopted under the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities in the light of different national circumstances. They recognized that peaking of Greenhouse Gas Emissions will take longer for developing countries, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. They stressed the importance of a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that addresses the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in a balanced way. They agreed to cooperate closely in the run-up to the 2021 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP26) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Conference (CBD COP15).
9. The Ministers appreciated the work being carried out under the Economy and Finance Pillar of BRICS Cooperation. In this regard, they looked forward to comprehensive implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025 through all means for its effective realization.

10. The Ministers noted with appreciation the role of the New Development Bank (NDB) in infrastructure and sustainable development financing and the Emergency Assistance Facility to combat the pandemic. They welcomed the establishment of NDB's Eurasian Regional Centre in Russia and looked forward to the opening of NDB's regional office in India in 2021. They also commended the progress made towards the Bank's membership expansion and encouraged the timely admission of new members.
11. The Ministers welcomed NDB's attention on social infrastructure, especially at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on our social infrastructure, notably on healthcare and education systems and called for investments in enhancing capacity for research, innovation and production of vaccine, in line with SDG 3.
12. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system with WTO at its centre. The Ministers reiterated that it is critical that all WTO Members avoid unilateral and protectionist measures, which run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO. They expressed their full support to the WTO's new Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, in her challenging tasks ahead. The Ministers looked forward to a successful MC12 and the early resumption of the normal operation of the Appellate Body.
13. The Ministers recognized the continued need to cooperate on disarmament and non-proliferation matters. They called for strengthening of the international disarmament machinery including the Conference on Disarmament. The Ministers underlined the imperative of dialogue to address increasing international peace and security challenges through political and diplomatic means. The Ministers welcomed, in this regard, the extension of the 2010 Russia-US Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and acknowledged its important role in maintaining global security and stability. They confirmed the commitment to ensure prevention of an arms race in outer space and its weaponization, and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, including through the adoption of a relevant multilateral legally binding instrument. The Ministers in this regard noted the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, proposed and updated by China and the Russian Federation.
14. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and

Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC). They underlined the need to comply with and strengthen the BTWC, including by adopting a legally binding Protocol to the Convention that provides for, inter alia, an efficient verification mechanism. They also reaffirmed support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and called upon the State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to uphold the Convention and the integrity of the CWC and engage in a constructive dialogue with a view to restoring the spirit of consensus in the OPCW.

15. The Ministers commended the finalisation of the text of the Agreement among BRICS space agencies on Cooperation on BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation, which will help address challenges related to research of global climate change, disaster management, environmental protection, prevention of food shortage and water resources scarcity, and sustainable socio-economic development. They highlighted the importance of digital and technological solutions in line with efforts to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in this 'Decade of Action'.
16. The Ministers expressed their concern at continuing conflicts and violence in different parts of the world which impact international and regional peace and security. They reiterated that all conflicts should be resolved by peaceful means in line with international law and the UN Charter. The Ministers recognized that armed conflicts can exacerbate the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed concern that the Security Council's call for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities was not fully heeded.
17. The Ministers expressed deep concern over the situation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and emphasized that conflicts and crises in the region should be resolved by political and diplomatic means through inclusive dialogue, in accordance with international law, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. They welcomed developments that mitigated frictions and encouraged constructive engagement. The Ministers endorsed the outcomes of the Meeting of BRICS Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys on 17 May 2021.
18. The Ministers welcomed the announcement of the Gaza ceasefire beginning 21 May 2021 and stressed the urgency of the restoration of calm in full. They mourned the loss of civilian lives resulting from the violence and urged the international community's immediate attention to providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly in Gaza. The Ministers

reiterated their support for a two-State solution resulting in comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders. They supported the Secretary General's call for the international community to work with the United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on developing an integrated, robust package of support for a swift and sustainable reconstruction and recovery.

19. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. They expressed their conviction that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. They also reaffirmed their support to a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in full compliance with UNSC Resolution 2254. They noted in this context the importance of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, launched with the decisive participation of the countries-guarantors of the Astana Process and all states engaged in efforts to address the conflict through political means, and welcomed the efforts of Mr Geir Pedersen, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Syria, to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Committee. They reiterated their conviction that in order to reach general agreement, members of the Constitutional Committee should be guided by the commitment to compromise and cooperate constructively without foreign interference. They emphasized the fundamental importance of allowing unhindered humanitarian aid in accordance with the UN humanitarian principles and the post-conflict reconstruction of Syria that would create conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of permanent residence thus contributing to achieving long-term stability and security in Syria and the region in general.
20. The Ministers expressed grave concern at the ongoing conflict in Yemen which affects the security and stability not only of Yemen, but also of the entire region, and has caused what is being called by the United Nations as the worst humanitarian crisis currently in the world. They called for a complete cessation of hostilities and the establishment of an inclusive, Yemeni-led negotiation process mediated by the UN. They also stressed the importance of providing urgent humanitarian access and assistance to all Yemenis.
21. The Ministers expressed concern over the security situation and continuing armed conflicts in parts of Africa and called for international support for regional and subregional initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable peace and security, as well as development in Africa guided by the principle "African solutions to African

problems” as articulated by Africans themselves. They further underscored the importance of an enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security.

22. The Ministers stressed that a stable, democratic, inclusive, independent, prosperous, sovereign, peaceful Afghanistan is crucial for the progress of the region. They expressed their deep concern about the continuing high level of violence and the security situation in Afghanistan and emphasised the need to preserve the gains made over the last two decades and to protect the rights of all Afghan citizens, especially women, children and minorities. They reiterated their commitment towards an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and an important role of the UN in peace-making and peacebuilding in Afghanistan. They welcomed all international efforts aimed at establishing sustainable peace in Afghanistan. They strongly condemned the continuing violence in Afghanistan, especially deliberate targeting of civilians by terrorist groups. They called for an immediate, permanent and comprehensive cease-fire. They stressed the urgent necessity of the elimination of the threat of UNSC proscribed terrorist groups to lasting peace in Afghanistan.
23. The Ministers reiterated the need to resolve the Iran nuclear issue through peaceful and diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including the negotiations within the framework of the JCPOA, and the importance of the full implementation of the JCPOA and the UNSCR 2231. They welcomed the extension of the “technical understandings” between Iran and the IAEA that allowed for the continuation of necessary verification and monitoring activities.
24. The Ministers underlined the importance of lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. They expressed their support for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to resolve all issues pertaining to the Korean Peninsula, including its complete denuclearization.
25. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of Myanmar. They voiced support to the recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) initiative and the implementation of its five-point consensus on Myanmar. They called on all sides to refrain from violence.
26. The Ministers expressed strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed. They recognized the threat emanating from terrorism, extremism conducive to

terrorism and radicalization. They resolved to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border movement of terrorists, terror financing networks and safe havens. They reiterated their resolve to step up joint efforts in building support for the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). Recalling the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by BRICS Leaders in 2020, and the principles on which the BRICS countries' counter terrorism cooperation is based on, they reiterated their commitment to finalize a result-oriented Action Plan by the Counter Terrorism Working Group in 2021.

27. The Ministers expressed deep concern about significant increase in illicit production of and trafficking in all types of drugs worldwide. They reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug control conventions. They emphasized the importance of promoting cooperation in the field of counter-narcotics within the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group as well as in the international and regional fora.
28. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to promote international anti-corruption cooperation and strengthen BRICS collaboration, subject to domestic legal systems, on issues related to anti-corruption law enforcement, including asset recovery.
29. The Ministers reiterated the need of a comprehensive and balanced approach to ICTs development and security, including technical advancement, business development, of safeguarding the security of States and public interests, and of respecting the right to privacy of individuals. They underscored the leading role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue to forge common understandings on the security of and in the use of ICTs and development of universally agreed norms, rules and principles for responsible behaviour of States in the realm of ICTs, without prejudice to other relevant international fora. They emphasized the importance of international law and principles applicable in this sphere. In this regard, they welcomed the work of the UN Open-Ended Working Group as well as of the Group of Governmental Experts and note progress in the discussions. They also reaffirmed the importance of having a legal framework of cooperation among BRICS countries on ensuring security in the use of ICTs. They reaffirmed the importance of advancing the intra-BRICS cooperation, including through the consideration of relevant initiatives and the implementation of the BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on Ensuring Security in the Use of ICTs.

30. The Ministers, while emphasizing the formidable potential of the ICTs for growth and development, recognized new associated possibilities it brings for criminal activities and threats. The Ministers expressed concern over the rising level and complexity of criminal misuse of ICTs as well as the absence of a UN-led framework to counter crime in the realm of ICTs. They recognized also that new challenges and threats in this respect require international cooperation and welcomed the launch of the UN Open-Ended Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.
31. The Ministers acknowledged that innovation was one of the key driving forces of global sustainable development, playing a fundamental role in promoting economic growth, supporting job creation, entrepreneurship, and structural reform, enhancing productivity and competitiveness, providing better services for the citizens and addressing global challenges. In this regard, they looked forward to the adoption of the Innovation Cooperation Action Plan for 2021-24 this year.
32. The Ministers reiterated the need to promote industrial growth and welcomed further advancement of BRICS trade and investment cooperation, including within the framework of the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR). The Ministers welcomed the launch of the BRICS PartNIR Innovation Center in China and looked forward to follow up discussions on the initiative to establish a BRICS Centre for Industrial Competences.
33. The Ministers reiterated the need for all countries to cooperate in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms under the principles of equality and mutual respect. They agreed to continue to treat all human rights, including the right to development, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. They agreed to strengthen cooperation on issues of common interests both within BRICS and in multilateral fora including the United Nations Human Rights Council, taking into account the necessity to promote, protect and fulfill human rights in a non-selective, non-politicized and constructive manner, and without double standards.
34. The Ministers noted with appreciation the ongoing activities and cooperation in the BRICS third pillar, namely people-to-people and cultural cooperation. They welcomed the developments and meetings in both business-to-business (B2B) and people-to-people (P2P) spheres, including those of BRICS Academic Forum, BRICS Think Tank Council, BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism, BRICS Women's Business Alliance, BRICS Business Council, BRICS Network University and

looked forward to greater cooperation in these areas. They supported China to host Beijing Winter Olympic Games.

35. Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa extended their full support to India in hosting the 13th BRICS Summit in September 2021 and committed themselves to work together for its fruitful outcomes.

New Delhi
01 June 2021