

Joint Declaration of the 4th Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development

Brasilia, Brazil, 13th March 2015

1. In accordance with the mandate contained in the Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan, adopted by the Leaders at the Sixth BRICS Summit, we, the Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development of the BRICS countries, met in Brasilia, Brazil, on 13 March 2015. We reviewed our prolific cooperation and coordination agenda and discussed the way ahead for future initiatives and enhanced continued cooperation.

We, therefore:

2. Recalled the commitment, expressed by the Leaders at the Fortaleza Summit, in accordance with Action Plan 2012-2016 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS, to promote agricultural cooperation and to exchange information on strategies to ensure access to food for the most vulnerable population, reduction of the negative impact of climate change on food security and adaptation of agriculture to climate change. We emphasized the importance and potential of BRICS cooperation in agriculture and agrarian development and underscored that agricultural development of the BRICS countries plays a key role in ensuring both the prosperity of the global economy and global food security.

3. Noted that BRICS countries have made a fundamental contribution to world food security, given that a sizeable majority of the 209 million women and men who have been lifted out of food insecurity in the past two decades reside in the BRICS countries, as stated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in its report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014". In particular, we recognized the important role of public procurement programs that purchase food from family farmers for food distribution, school feeding and other programs, as policy instruments for achieving food and nutrition security, while providing access to local markets and income generation for national small-scale food producers in the BRICS and other emerging market economies and developing countries.

4. Commended the work of BRICS Trade Ministers and reiterated the statement made in their 4th meeting in Fortaleza that the World Trade Organization (WTO) work program should reflect the centrality of agriculture and of the development dimension of the Doha Round. We emphasized that agriculture, and rural and agrarian development are areas in which the five countries are confronted with similar challenges and are in a position to take advantage of similar opportunities. We recalled that the five countries are committed to ensuring food and nutrition security, in our own countries and worldwide; are key global players in the production and trade of agricultural goods; and count with cutting-edge technology in many agricultural sectors.

5. Expressed our satisfaction with the intense coordination and dialogue between BRICS representatives at FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Program and in other relevant multilateral fora. We welcomed the creation of an informal consultative group of BRICS countries in Rome to coordinate initiatives on food security and smallholder agriculture as agreed in the 2012-2016

Action Plan. Among areas to be addressed at the FAO, we agreed to maintain coordination and dialogue on issues discussed by the FAO governing bodies, in particular on the follow up activities of the II International Conference on Nutrition and the International Year of Family Farming, on information systems such as the Agricultural Marketing Information System (AMIS) and on cooperation in the humanitarian field of food assistance, as well as on issues discussed at the Committee on World Food Security.

6. Furthermore, in the context of the ongoing activities of the International Year of Soils, we noted our intention to raise awareness among stakeholders about the importance of soil for agriculture, to support effective policies and actions for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources, to promote investment in sustainable use of soil, to develop and maintain healthy soils for different land users and population groups.

7. Agreed that the Group would exchange views amongst themselves and with BRICS representations to the United Nations (UN) in New York, in particular, on the negotiations of Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and to other UN instances where matters related to agriculture, agrarian and rural development are being discussed.

8. Expressed our satisfaction with the ongoing implementation of the Action Plan 2012-2016, adopted in Chengdu, China in 2011, and commended the BRICS Agricultural Cooperation Working Group for the efforts being undertaken to that end.

9. Deeply appreciated Brazil for hosting, prior to our meeting, a Seminar on Public Policies for Food and Nutrition Security and the Strengthening of Family Farming, in which experts exchanged information on the complementarities between successful national strategies of the BRICS countries and their respective regions and examined how to advance in attaining these shared priority goals. It was agreed that the results of the seminar would be systematized as part of the elaboration of a General Strategy for ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable populations of BRICS and other developing countries, in line with the Action Plan 2012-2016.

10. Agreed that BRICS countries should seek to promote trade and investment in the agricultural sector through participation in exhibitions, trade fairs and investment fora. We noted that BRICS countries will host important international agricultural fairs and exhibitions, such as the exhibition of agricultural investment projects of BRICS countries and the Agribusiness Forum in Russia, the Agroexpo in China and the Southern African International Trade Exhibition in South Africa, in 2015, and Agri Expo in India, in 2016.

11. Agreed to establish cooperation agreements and arrangements among BRICS countries, with a view to facilitate greater access to their agricultural markets.

12. Recalled the grave distortion caused by agricultural export subsidies on international trade and reiterated our commitment in supporting WTO negotiations for eliminating the use of this policy instrument by countries as stated in the WTO Ministerial Conference Declaration, adopted in Bali, 2013.

13. Agreed that in line with the Bali Ministerial Conference, multilateral negotiations

should prioritize efforts to create a level playing field by substantially improving market access, eliminating export subsidies and significantly reducing the level of trade distorting domestic support. We reaffirmed our commitment to work together to negotiate and make all concerted efforts to agree and adopt a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes by 31st December 2015 in line with the decision adopted by the WTO General Council on 27th November 2014.

14. Welcomed the presentation of a revised draft proposal for the creation of the Basic Agricultural Information Exchange System of BRICS countries, noted with satisfaction the progress in the elaboration of the proposal and called upon our technical experts to continue their joint work with a view to ensure the system's development and to consider its possible linkage with AMIS in order to avoid unnecessary duplications.

15. Reaffirmed our commitment in intensifying BRICS cooperation in the areas of agricultural science, technology, innovation and capacity building, including technologies for smallholder farming.

16. Highlighted the relevance of ensuring the production of safe and healthy food and consumer protection. In this context, we stressed that science must be the foundation of both national and international food standards and control systems. Moreover, we emphasized that BRICS countries should use, as the basis of their measures, the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the international standard-setting bodies such as the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Organization for Animal Health, inter alia, as recognized by the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. Our countries should also exchange views on labeling rules.

17. Expressed our grave concern over the negative impact of climate change, especially the risks posed by extreme weather events, on agriculture and food and nutrition security. We agreed that adapting to the impact of climate change and mitigating its negative effects, while increasing agricultural production, requires evidence-based approaches that consider science, technology and innovation as well as traditional knowledge, as appropriate. We agreed to enhance our cooperation and to continue exchanging information and sharing experiences on our relevant national policies, programs, plans and climate change adaptation strategies.

18. Recalled the signing of the agreement establishing the New Development Bank during the Sixth BRICS Summit and its purpose of mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging and developing economies.

19. Expressed our appreciation to the Federative Republic of Brazil for organizing and hosting the 4th Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development and expressed our support to the Russian Federation, the host of the upcoming Ministerial, in its efforts to organize it.