

BRICS Joint Statement on Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System

June 1, 2021

1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations 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 met on 1 June 2021 in via Video Conferencing. On the landmark occasion of the 15th anniversary of BRICS, the Ministers espoused their shared values of peace, freedom and rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy as well as a more fair, just, inclusive, equitable and representative multipolar international system, based on international law and the UN Charter, in particular sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and mutual respect for interests and concerns of all.

2. The Ministers noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has, over the past year and a half, manifested itself as one of the most serious global challenges in recent history, wreaking immeasurable political, economic and social damage, and thereby reminding us that in an intertwined world, truly effective and representative multilateralism is no longer an abstract ideal to be evoked in matters of war and peace alone, but an essential tool for ensuring successful governance of matters of everyday life and promoting well-being of people and a sustainable future for the planet. The Ministers reaffirmed that only together could the international community build resilience against future pandemics and other global challenges.

3. The Ministers agreed that the 15th anniversary of BRICS, following soon after the 75th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations and the end of the Second World War in 2020, and the unprecedented fury of the pandemic provide important context for joint efforts aimed at strengthening and reforming the multilateral system to make it more resilient, efficient, effective, transparent and representative.

4. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to multilateralism through upholding international law, including the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as its indispensable cornerstone, and to the central role of the United Nations in an international system in which sovereign States cooperate to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development, ensure the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all with the aim to build a brighter shared future for the international community based on mutually beneficial cooperation. They reaffirmed the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the resolution of international disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law as well as the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. They stressed further the imperative of refraining from any coercive measures not based on international law and the UN Charter.

5. The Ministers reaffirmed the sole authority of the UN Security Council for imposing sanctions and called for further consolidation and strengthening of the working methods of UN Security Council Sanctions Committees to ensure their effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed that multilateralism should promote international law, democracy, equity and justice, mutual respect, right to development and non-interference in internal affairs of any country without double standards.

7. The Ministers acknowledged the many achievements of the UN and its associated architecture. They noted, however, that its continued success and relevance would be determined by its ability to adapt to the realities of today's world, which is starkly different from what it was at the time of its creation more than 75 years ago. They stressed their commitment to the important role of international organizations and to improve their efficacy and working methods, as well as to improving the system of global governance, and agreed to promote a more agile, effective, representative and accountable system that can deliver better in the field, address global challenges and better serve the interests of Member States.

8. The Ministers acknowledged that the current interconnected international challenges should be addressed through reinvigorated and reformed multilateral system, especially of the UN and its principal organs, and other multilateral institutions such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), with a view to enhancing its capacity to effectively address the diverse challenges of our time and to adapt them to twenty-first century realities.

9. The Ministers agreed that the task of Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System encompasses, inter alia, the following:

i. It should make instruments of global governance more inclusive, representative and participatory to facilitate greater and more meaningful participation of developing and least developed countries, especially Africa, in global decision-making processes and structures and make it better attuned to contemporary realities.

ii. It should be based on inclusive consultation and collaboration for the benefit of all, while respecting sovereign independence, equality, mutual legitimate interests and concerns to make the multilateral organizations more responsive, effective, transparent and credible.

iii. It should make multilateral organizations more responsive, effective, transparent, democratic, objective, action-oriented, solution-oriented and credible, so as to promote cooperation in building international relations based on the norms and principles of international law, and the spirit of mutual respect, justice, equality, mutual beneficial cooperation and realities of the contemporary world.

iv. It should use innovative and inclusive solutions, including digital and technological tools to promote sustainable development and facilitate affordable and equitable access to global public goods for all.

v. It should strengthen capacities of individual States and international organizations to better respond to new and emerging, traditional and non-traditional challenges, including those emanating from terrorism, money laundering, cyber-realm, infodemics and fake news.

vi. It should promote international and regional peace and security, social and economic development, and preserve nature's balance with people-centered international cooperation at its core.

Principal Organs of the United Nations

10. The Ministers recalled the UNGA Resolution 75/1 and reiterated the call for reforms of the principal organs of the United Nations. They recommitted to instill new life in the discussions on reform of the UN Security Council and continue the work to revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council. They took note with satisfaction of the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding architecture and agreed to reinforce their coordination in the Peacebuilding Commission.

11. The Ministers recalled the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of the developing countries so that it can adequately respond to global challenges. China and Russia reiterated the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and supported their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.

12. The Ministers also commended India and South Africa for their respective present and recent terms served in the UN Security Council. They also recognized the candidacy of Brazil as a UN Security Council member for the 2022-2023 biennium.

13. The Ministers emphasized the urgency of revitalization of the UN General Assembly so as to enhance its role and authority in accordance with the UN Charter, and in this regard called for identification of

best practices and working methods across its various Committees for implementation of its Resolutions.

14. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen ECOSOC's role in policy guidance, oversight and coordination. They called for the Council to continue addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner, recognizing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as a comprehensive, indivisible, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative targets adopted to deal with the challenges of the decade ahead, including through regional development initiatives. The Ministers agreed that the United Nations needs to make development central to the global macro policy framework.

15. The Ministers stressed the importance of preserving a balanced approach and a rational division of labor between the different principal organs, missions, agencies and funds, based on the UN Charter and on specific mandates.

16. The Ministers recognized that in order to effectively comply with the principles and objectives of the Charter, there was a need for an efficient and accountable UN Secretariat, and in this regard called for the establishment of effective mechanisms to strengthen the Secretariat's accountability and oversight, improve its management performance and transparency, representation and reinforce ethical conduct. The Ministers called for the implementation of equitable geographical representation across the UN system. The Ministers noted the progress made in increasing gender equity in the UN.

International Peace and Security

17. The Ministers called for continued efforts to strengthen the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and to preserve its integrity for maintaining global stability and international peace and security, and stressed further the need to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency as well as the consensus-based nature of the relevant multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

International Financial Architecture

18. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to broadening and strengthening the participation of emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs) in the international economic decision-making and norm-setting processes, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. To that end, they stressed the importance of continuing efforts to reform the international financial architecture, noting that enhancing the voice and participation of EMDCs, including the least developed countries, in the Bretton Woods institutions remains a continuous concern.

19. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a strong Global Financial Safety Net with a quota-based and adequately resourced IMF at its center and expressed their deep disappointment at the failure in addressing the quota and governance reforms under the 15th General Review of Quotas (GRQ). They called for the timely and successful completion of the 16th GRQ by December 15, 2023, to reduce the IMF's reliance on temporary resources and to address under-representation of EMDCs for their meaningful engagement in the governance of IMF and to protect the voice and quota shares of its poorest and smallest members and have a new quota formula that better reflects the economic weight of members.

20. The Ministers called for governance reform in the recruitment processes of the World Bank and the IMF by ensuring selection through an open and merit-based process, noting that the true potential of the Bank and Fund would be realized only by building more democratic governance structures and strengthening their financial capacity.

Trade and Development

21. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for a transparent, rules-based, open, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization at its core, and in this regard reiterated their support for the necessary and urgent reform which would inter alia, preserve the centrality, core values and fundamental principles of the WTO and consider the interests of all members, including developing countries and LDCs, recognizing that the majority of the WTO members are developing countries. It is critical that all WTO members avoid unilateral and protectionist measures that run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO.

22. The Ministers stressed the need to restore the normal functioning of all WTO's functions as highlighted in the Joint Statement by BRICS Trade Ministers on Multilateral Trading System and the WTO Reform of 2020. They emphasized the primary importance of ensuring the restoration and preservation of the normal functioning of a two-stage WTO Dispute Settlement system, including the expeditious appointment of all Appellate Body members.

23. The Ministers acknowledged that global economic governance in an increasingly interconnected world is of critical importance for the success of national efforts for achieving sustainable development in all countries, and that, while efforts have been made over the years, there remains a need to continue improving global economic governance and to strengthen the role of the United Nations in this regard with extensive consultations and joint contributions for the shared benefits.

24. The Ministers reiterated the important role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the integrated treatment of trade and development, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development and reaffirmed support for its vital mandate and promotion of an open and inclusive global economy and provision of development oriented policy analysis.

Global Health

25. The Ministers recognized that the current global challenges, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, are a powerful reminder of the imperative to strengthen cooperation amongst States. While acknowledging the measures taken by the WHO, governments, non-profit organisations, academia, business and industry in combating the pandemic, they also expect the international community to reform and strengthen policy responses of WHO to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and other current and future health challenges.

26. The Ministers recognized the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health in preventing, containing, and stopping transmission to bring the pandemic to an end and foster a rapid, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery, and in this context underlined the urgency for expeditious development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines, especially in developing countries, and called for further close cooperation between various stakeholders for a diversified vaccine portfolio.

27. The Ministers stressed the need to promote initiatives aimed at ensuring timely, affordable, and equitable access to, as well as the distribution of diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, and essential health products and technologies, and their components, as well as equipment to combat COVID-19 pandemic and to support the achievement of universal health coverage including preventive measures and actions. The Ministers reaffirmed the need to use all relevant measures during the pandemic, including supporting ongoing consideration in WTO on a Covid-19 vaccine Intellectual Property Rights waiver and the use of flexibilities of the TRIPS agreement and the Doha Declaration on TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. They also reiterated the need for sharing of vaccine doses, transfer of technology, development of local production capacities and supply chains for medical products, promotion of price transparency and called for exercise of due restraint in the implementation of measures that could hinder the flow of vaccines, health products and essential inputs.

28. The Ministers recommitted to strengthening and reforming the multilateral system through enhanced cooperation and close coordination in all relevant multilateral fora and international organizations including, the UN and G20.

Source: [Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India](#)