

**Media Note on the Meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers
on the Margins of the 68th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

September 26, 2013, New York

The BRICS Foreign Ministers met on 26 September 2013 on the margins of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Ministers congratulated the South African Presidency and appreciated the good pace of implementation of the eThekweni Action Plan.

The Ministers exchanged their points of view on the following issues of the United Nations agenda.

Syria

The Ministers expressed deep concern about the ongoing violence and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria. They called upon all parties to commit immediately to a complete cease-fire, to halt violence and to end all violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Taking note of the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Ministers strongly condemned the use of such weapons by anyone in any circumstances.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction with recent important developments that bring renewed hope for a peaceful resolution to the Syrian conflict. They welcomed the framework agreement for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons reached by Russia and the United States. They further welcomed, in particular, the decision of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the commitment of the Syrian authorities to provisionally apply the Convention prior to its entry into force and the delivery of the initial roster. They recognised the key responsibility of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in this regard and look forward to the decisions of the OPCW and the Security Council in support to the Framework Agreement.

The Ministers reiterated that there is no military solution to the conflict and that it is time for diplomacy.

They stressed that the elimination of chemical weapons and the political process aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict should be pursued in parallel. They also reiterated their support for the convening of an international conference on the Syrian situation as early as possible. They stressed that only an inclusive political process, led by the Syrians, as recommended in the Action Group on Syria Communiqué issued in 2012 could lead to peace, to the effective protection of civilians and to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian society for freedom and prosperity. They expressed their full support to the efforts of the UN-Arab League Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in helping finding a political solution to the crisis.

Middle East Peace Process

The Ministers welcomed the announcement of the resumption of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis as an encouraging development. They reaffirmed that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a prerequisite for building a sustainable and lasting peace in the Middle East region. They expressed their expectation that this renewed effort will lead to a two-state solution with a contiguous and economically viable Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace with Israel, within internationally recognized borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In recalling the primary responsibility of the UNSC in maintaining international peace and security, they noted the importance that the Quartet reports regularly to the Council about its efforts, which should contribute to concrete progress. They expressed concern about the construction of Israeli settlements

in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which constitutes a violation of international law and is harmful to the peace process.

Cyber Security

The Ministers expressed their concern about the reported practices of unauthorized interception of communications and data from citizens, businesses and members of governments, compromising national sovereignty and individual rights. They reiterated that it is important to contribute to and participate in a peaceful, secure, and open cyberspace and emphasized that security in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) through universally accepted norms, standards and practices is of paramount importance.

The Ministers thanked Brazil for the briefing on the plans and preparations for the VI BRICS Summit to be held in 2014.