

Press Release: BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting

New York, September 24, 2011

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attended a meeting of BRICS foreign ministers, held in New York City on September 23, 2011.

At the forefront of the discussion was the situation in and around Syria. The ministers stated their resolve to maintain the unity of approaches to the Syrian issue at the UN Security Council. They noted that an escalation of sanctions against Damascus would provoke opposition to ratchet up confrontation with the authorities. And this would only aggravate the situation even more and put regional peace and security in jeopardy. At the same time, the Russian Minister at the meeting emphasized the urgency of carrying out the reforms announced by Syria's government so that people could really feel the benefits of the change.

The meeting also discussed the situation in Libya. In Russia's view, the main decision maker in devising the parameters for post-conflict settlement in the country must be the UN Security Council, responsible for security matters. At the same time, the Russian Minister said that the BRICS countries should learn lessons from the Libyan crisis. It is important to firmly insist on the central role for the UN Security Council in questions of international peace and security. In order to avoid further abuse of sanctions resolutions of the Security Council, complete clarity ought to be sought in such matters as the nature of the sanctions and conditions for their imposition, the targets of sanctions pressure and the conditions for lifting the sanctions.

Lavrov informed his counterparts about the work being done in the Middle East Quartet, including in the context of the situation around the Palestinian UN bid for independence.

The Russian side expressed satisfaction with the high level of interaction among the BRICS states in the UN framework, characterized by coincidence or closeness of positions on a wide range of issues on the international agenda.

Lavrov noted the importance Russia attaches to developing interaction with its BRICS partners in the G20 framework. It is especially needed at this time when negative trends are growing in the world economy.

The meeting discussed questions of further development of cooperation among the BRICS states based on the Action Plan adopted by their leaders at the summit in Sanya. It stated that cooperation in the five-nation format is becoming ever more intensive and specific.

Russia regards participation in the BRICS as one of the main thrusts of its foreign policy, and intends to actively facilitate the strengthening of this association.