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10th BRICS SUMMIT



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa hosting the 10th BRICS Summit

Towards the second decade of strategic cooperation

President Cyril Ramaphosa

THIS week I will have the opportunity to host my fellow BRICS Counterparts on the occasion of the 10th BRICS Summit. The year 2018 holds special significance in the BRICS historical trajectory as it concludes the first decade of BRICS Summits at the highest diplomatic level. This year is also important as the BRICS Chairship coincides with the Year of Nelson Mandela, as South Africa and indeed the world celebrates the centenary of his birth.

I have conveyed to my counterparts that during this event, it is South Africa's intention to reflect on the decade long cooperation and chart the way forward as we usher in the second decade of BRICS cooperation. It is with this in mind that South Africa has chosen the theme for the 10th BRICS Summit to be: "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution".

This theme is reflective of the core priorities of BRICS as developed in the first decade of the Forum's strategic cooperation. The BRICS Forum has committed itself to the creation of inclusive development, by advancing global partnerships based on mutual benefit and openness, and that are reflective of the need to address common challenges that will bring prosperity to all humankind.

The reality that is the 4th Industrial Revolution has accorded us an opportunity to express our core principles and navigate a global environment that is already on the precipice of a dynamic shift in terms of international politics and the



global economy especially in the context of future of economic development.

In 2013, at the Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) held in Cape Town, the BRICS member countries recognised the need to develop STI cooperation and in subsequent meetings further reinforced this need for the advancement of innovation. The BRICS Action Plan for Innovation Cooperation for the period 2017 – 2020, adopted in 2017, stressed the primacy of innovation as a key to global sustainable development as it unlocks human potential through entrepreneurship, job creation and economic growth for the benefit of society.

The BRICS countries also established a broad framework for increased cooperation with regards to economic development and growth and the groups' global competitiveness in 2015 increased with the adoption of the BRICS Strategy for Economic Partnership. The Strategy for Economic Partnership set an outline for inclusive growth and shared prosperity for BRICS members by advocating for greater "macro-economic co-

ordination and fostering innovative economic development based on advanced technologies and skills development with a view to building knowledge economies".

During India's Chairship of BRICS in 2016, the Jaipur Declaration was endorsed by BRICS Leaders. Setting the ground for strengthened cooperation in STI by identifying 19 priority areas, notably (i) innovation advancement and technology transfer; (ii) science parks and incubators; and (iii) geospatial technology and its application. China as part of its hosting of the G20 Summit in Hangzhou (Hangzhou Summit) in 2016 also broadened the scope by facilitating the adoption of the G20 Blueprint on Innovative Growth and the G20 New Industrial Revolution Action Plan. At the crux of BRICS cooperation is the need to ensure innovative growth by addressing common challenges of poverty, inequality, social exclusion and bridging the technological gap.

BRICS Leaders in acknowledging the progress made at the Hangzhou Summit noted and celebrated the emphasis on the developmental agenda and the need to promote in-

novation in a global economic environment requiring much needed cooperation to foster greater economic growth and development. The Leaders "stressed the importance to foster an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy to usher in a new era of global growth and sustainable development". The BRICS countries have set themselves on a path to realise the empowerment of our countries in the next phase of global economic development.

In addressing STI and its strategies, especially in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution, BRICS has been cognisant of the significant developments notably: (i) the Internet of Things (IoT); (ii) Big Data and cloud computing; (iii) Artificial Intelligence (AI); and (iv) automation and robotics, the impact thereof in our way of life such as in manufacturing and their potential with regards to health with the advent of nanotechnology and biotechnology.

South Africa during its Chairship, and as reflected in the theme, seeks to consolidate the multi-sectoral progress that has been made by BRICS members and build towards the realisation of alleviating our common challenges by establishing a framework on the 4th Industrial Revolution geared towards support for industrialisation and sustainable development.

South Africa moreover wishes to seize the opportunity presented by its 2018 Chairship of BRICS to reiterate its commitment to further strengthening relations with and amongst its BRICS partners, the African continent and the Global South.