

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs / International Relations**

*26 July 2019, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*

1. The meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs / International Relations took place on 26 July 2019, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the representation 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.

2. The Ministers exchanged views on key issues on the international agenda. They also reviewed with satisfaction the progress of BRICS cooperation featuring mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation. The Ministers agreed to further deepen BRICS three-pillar-driven cooperation in the areas of economy, peace and security and people-to-people exchanges.

3. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to upholding and respecting international law and to an international system in which sovereign States cooperate to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development and ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. They underlined support for multilateralism and the central role of the UN in international affairs, and the commitment to uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. They reiterated the urgent need to strengthen and reform the multilateral system, including the UN, the WTO, the IMF, and other international organizations. The international system, including international organizations, in particular the United Nations, which Ministers stressed must be driven by Member States, should promote the interests of all. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, democracy, inclusiveness and strengthened collaboration, and to build a brighter shared future for the global community through mutually beneficial cooperation. To this end, international governance should be more inclusive, representative and participatory.

4. 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 reiterate the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.

5. They underscored the importance of sustained efforts aimed at making the United Nations more effective and efficient in implementing its mandates. They encouraged further collaboration amongst the BRICS countries on a better resourced UN, on its

administration and budget, on preserving the UN's Member State-driven character and ensuring better oversight of and on strengthening the Organisation.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to international peace and security and underlined the imperative of countering challenges through political and diplomatic means and the need, in this regard, to avoid all measures, especially coercive measures, that are inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations. They emphasized the need to continue to work together in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, including by ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as well as prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Ministers acknowledged the relevant work carried out by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and expressed their disappointment that it was unable to reach consensus on its report. The Ministers noted the unique role of the United Nations Committee of the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in elaboration of the ‘Space 2030’ agenda and its implementation plan, in accordance with the UNGA Resolution 73/6.

7. The Ministers emphasized the importance to comply with and strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC), including by adopting a Protocol to the Convention that provides for, inter alia, an efficient verification mechanism. They reaffirmed that the BTWC is the core instrument for biological and toxin weapons. Its functions, including in what concerns the UN Security Council, should not be duplicated by other mechanisms.

8. The Ministers expressed concerns at conflicts and situations in the Middle East and North Africa and several other regions that have significant impact at both the regional and international levels. They concurred that, irrespective of their historic background and distinctive nature, conflicts in those regions should be resolved according to principles of international law, dialogue and negotiations. They endorsed the Media Statement of the Meeting of BRICS Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys (MENA), held in Brasília, on 4 and 5 July 2019 and agreed that those conflicts and situations require sustained assessment and attention.

9. The Ministers reiterated support for international and national efforts to achieve an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned” peace and reconciliation process and to build a peaceful, secure, united, stable, prosperous and inclusive country that exists in harmony with its neighbours. They expressed their concern over the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan particularly the increase in the number and intensity of terrorist-related attacks on the Afghan National Security Forces, the Government and civilians. They looked forward to the Presidential elections scheduled for September 2019.

10. The Ministers welcomed recent developments to achieve the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and maintain peace and stability in North East Asia. They reaffirmed the commitment for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation.

11. The Ministers expressed the concern over the heightened tensions in the Gulf region and called for a peaceful political solution through dialogue and diplomatic engagement.

12. The Ministers deplored recent terrorist attacks, including in some BRICS countries. They condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations wherever and by whomsoever committed and recognized terrorist acts as criminal and unjustifiable, which should not be associated with any religion, nationality, ethnic group or civilization. They urged for concerted efforts to fight terrorism under UN auspices on a firm international legal basis, recognized the primary role of States and their competent bodies in preventing and countering terrorism and expressed their conviction that a comprehensive approach is necessary to ensure effective results against terrorism, which should include countering radicalisation, recruitment, travel of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, blocking sources and channels of terrorist financing including, for instance, through organised crime by means of money-laundering, supply of weapons, drug trafficking and other criminal activities, dismantling terrorist bases, and countering misuse of the Internet by terrorist entities through misuse of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). They recalled the responsibility of all States to prevent the financing of terrorist networks and terrorist actions from their territories. They also called for an expedited adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UN General Assembly. They emphasized the importance of preventing and combating the financing of terrorism and welcomed the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2462 (2019). To address the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, they emphasized the need to launch multilateral negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, including at the Conference on Disarmament.

13. The Ministers recognized progress that has been made on BRICS cooperation in countering terrorism through the BRICS Working Group on Counter Terrorism. They looked forward to the outcomes of the Fourth BRICS Working Group meeting, including the establishment of sub-working groups on specific themes, and the seminar on terrorism to be held in Brazil from July 29<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

14. The Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to support international cooperation in combating illicit financial flows from all types of criminal activity, including within the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the World Customs Organization. In this regard, they underscored the importance of improving mutual exchanges and data sharing. They emphasized the importance of upholding and supporting the objectives of FATF, as well of intensifying cooperation to implement and improve its Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation.

15. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the legal framework related to the resolution of cases of corruption, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption and other multilateral principles and norms. They encouraged the BRICS Working Group on Anti-Corruption cooperation to continue its work on these issues. The Ministers also underlined their commitment to promote international

cooperation on the recovery and return of illicit assets, as well as extradition of fugitives, subject to domestic legal systems.

16. The Ministers underscored the importance of an open, secure, peaceful, stable accessible and nondiscriminatory environment for information and communications technologies (ICTs). They emphasized the importance of multilaterally agreed norms, rules and principles for the responsible behavior of States in the realm of ICT. They upheld the centrality of the United Nations in discussions on ICT-related security issues, without prejudice to other relevant international fora. In this connection, they welcomed the establishment of a UN open-ended working group on this matter, as well as the launch of a new edition of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). While pledging full support to both mechanisms, the Ministers underscored that the dual-track process can provide complementarity and synergies in the international efforts in this matter.

17. The Ministers expressed their concern about the growth of criminal misuse of ICTs and recognized the increasing gap between the lawful authorization to timely obtain vital evidence and the technological challenges to do so, which is a complex problem that requires urgent and sustained international attention. The Ministers acknowledged the progress made in promoting cooperation according to the BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on Ensuring Security in the Use of ICTs, and reaffirmed the need to deepen practical cooperation to tackle security threats and challenges in the use of ICTs. The Ministers encouraged the Fifth Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Security in the use of ICTs to further deepen cooperation in this regard.

18. The Ministers noted that important events such as the SDG Summit and the UN Climate Action Summit will be held during the 74th UN General Assembly in September, and looked forward to these events to produce positive outcomes. They reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and to the full implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted under the principles of the UNFCCC, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

19. The Ministers emphasized the centrality of people in BRICS and its programmes and supported the efforts in deepening people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation, especially in sports, youth, films, education and tourism, so as to enhance mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation amongst its peoples.

20. Russia, India, China and South Africa extended full support for Brazil in hosting the Eleventh BRICS Summit in 2019 and committed themselves to work together for its success.

21. The Ministers looked forward to their next meeting on the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.