



**JOINT DECLARATION
OF
BRICS MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE**

1. We, the Ministers of Agriculture 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 in New Delhi, Republic of India for the sixth Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture on the 23rd September, 2016, and discussed the way ahead for our future initiatives and continued cooperation.
2. We appreciate the need and progress made amongst the BRICS member countries in enhancing agriculture technology cooperation and innovation through the creation of a basic agricultural information exchange system, in reducing the impact of climate variability and change on food security and adaptation of agriculture to such changes, and in developing a general strategy for ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable populations and for promoting the trade and investment, which were identified as the main areas of cooperation.
3. We believe that promoting development of agriculture management and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, broadening of the genetic base of crops, livestock and fisheries and increase in the range of genetic diversity available to farmers, and raising the farmer's income are central to addressing the problems of rising income inequality, unemployment, and excessive food price volatility. With the constraints on natural resources such as land and water, the group firmly believes that enhancement in agricultural productivity and production, and product quality can only be achieved through strengthened research, technology transfer, and extension services /comprehensive producer support, and reforming social security and markets.
4. We also note that solving the problem of chronic household food insecurity is essential, and hence support giving differentiated yet coordinated considerations to transient and persistent food insecurity and nutrition in our policies, with a particular focus on providing them long-term food security. Thus, we recognize that the strategy to overcome the challenge of persistent

food insecurity mainly lies in interventions to raise smallholders' productivity and the purchasing power of the poor to improve and ensure food access to this vulnerable group. We commit to continue taking initiatives for cutting cost of food production, and strive for research in produce processing technologies and post-harvest management including storage to reduce food loss and waste.

5. We acknowledge that changing consumption patterns and higher consumption levels require emphasis on higher investments in the whole value chain, and increase in both public and private sector investments in agriculture. We therefore, commit to develop incentives and foster partnerships with both public and private sector for investments in agriculture. We believe that increasing public investment and creating favorable environment for enhanced private sector participation will promote integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors in rural areas, and spur growth in the agriculture sector.
6. We recognize that small agricultural holdings face grave challenges of viability and profitability in the context of increasingly complex food value chains, pressure on natural resources and climate change. Since these small holdings provide livelihood opportunities, it is necessary for the governments to protect the interest of these smallholder producers. Many of them lack access to resources. Therefore, governments need to prioritize and strengthen support for family farming and small agricultural holdings, provide a better environment for smallholders' collective actions and organization and their market integration, expand smallholders' access to innovation, inputs, capital, technology, and services, on the basis of gender equality and thus making them an asset in the process of economic transformation.
7. BRICS Members welcome initiatives that seek to address water management in line with investment in infrastructure, taking into account the dependence of agriculture on water. We resolve to invest in water infrastructure for irrigation to assist farmers in building resilience during times of drought. We stress the necessity to ensure the efficient use of water through designing of appropriate irrigation systems, rainwater harvesting, promotion of alternative methods of production, and to share experiences and expertise in this critical area.
8. We note that promoting agricultural sustainability is a key component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To maintain productivity growth in a sustainable manner, there is a need to move from input intensive approach to innovation and technology driven production systems to attain optimal resource use efficiency. This could be achieved through exchange of best practices, knowledge, information and technology that are conducive to the conservation and proper use of land, forest, and water.

9. We recognize the importance of deploying information and communication technology (ICT) in agriculture, as it creates an enabling environment to connect the farmers to inputs, technologies, financial services and markets by enhancing the scales of operation at various stages of production and post-production system.
10. We emphasize the importance of ensuring food security and nutrition, and eliminating hunger and poverty through increased agricultural production on a sustainable basis. We further envision BRICS as an important agriculture cooperation platform for developing and promoting models of sustainable agriculture and sharing them with others at global level with a view of addressing issues of world hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and income inequality.
11. It is acknowledged that agricultural land is a finite resource, which is subject to continuous population pressure and demand for alternate use impacting agriculture production. We, therefore, agree that the protection and preservation of cultivable land with high agricultural potential remains our priority.
12. We acknowledge the importance of the multilateral trade system as a means of promoting global trade. In this context, we welcome the outcomes of the WTO Tenth Ministerial Conference at Nairobi held in December 2015, especially as regards the elimination of agricultural export subsidies. We also recognize the importance of the conclusion of the Trade Facilitation Agreement ratification process for perishable food trade.
13. We are committed to providing safety and predictability to agricultural trade. In this regard, we will work to consolidate the scientific principles in sanitary and phyto-sanitary discussions. Similarly, we will work together to strengthen the global reference organizations relating to sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues: Codex Alimentarius, OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) and IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention).
14. We recognize that the commitment of the agricultural sector is critical to the success of the worldwide endeavors to conserve biodiversity and to ensure the continued provision of environmental services. Thus, we propose to share experience on policies regarding conservation of existing native vegetation, including that on the river banks with a view to contributing to our biodiversity

goals and targets while supporting the implementation of our nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.

15. We are deeply concerned about the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture affecting vast sections of population in general and vulnerable ones in particular. Hence, we acknowledge the need for cooperative and coordinated response in combating the negative influence of climate change. We shall therefore promote adoption of climate resilient agricultural technologies and enhance adaptive capacity through continuous exchange of information and sharing of experiences with respect to our relevant national policies, plans, programs, and research. We also recognize the efforts made by other countries through their nationally determined contributions following the adoption of the historic Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
16. We further welcome the declaration of the year 2016 as the International Year of Pulses by the United Nations General Assembly and endeavour to promote the value of pulses throughout the food system, recognizing their beneficial effect on soil fertility and in ameliorating malnutrition. We will promote production of pulses in the BRICS countries and raise awareness among the people about their importance in dietary nutrition.
17. We commend the work of BRICS Agriculture Cooperation Working Group and express our satisfaction in implementing the 2012-16 Action Plan. Based on the outcome and lessons of the 2012-16 action plan, we have identified priorities for future cooperation.
18. We welcome the outcome of the meeting of the experts from the BRICS countries held at New Delhi, wherein, it was agreed to develop a virtual BRICS Agricultural Research Platform (BRICS-ARP). This Platform aims to promote food security, sustainable agricultural development and poverty alleviation through strategic cooperation in agriculture among the member countries. Towards this end, the BRICS Members shall cooperate in the domains of agricultural research and development, technology transfer, capacity building and information sharing through networks of agriculture and allied disciplines.
19. We express our gratitude to the Republic of India for organizing and hosting the Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the BRICS countries and we pledge our support to the People's Republic of China, who will be hosting the seventh meeting in the year 2017.