

## **BRICS Statement on Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System and Reforming the WTO (FINAL)**

1. Reaffirming the support of BRICS member countries for an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied in the World Trade Organization (WTO);

2. Emphasizing the importance of an effectively functioning WTO with all its members abiding by the WTO rules and complying with their WTO commitments to preserve its central role in promoting predictability, stability and legal certainty for international trade;

3. Recognizing the urgent need to collectively address global economic challenges, including economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring equitable access to medical products, essential services and technologies needed to underpin the recovery, while narrowing the development divide between the developing and developed members that in many cases is widening due to the pandemic;

4. Recognizing the urgency and our willingness to engage constructively to pursue the necessary WTO reform with the aim of strengthening resilience, efficacy and authority of the organization and promoting inclusive economic growth and development;

5. Recognizing the importance of industrial development for sustained economic growth and prosperity, and the importance of more coherent considerations of the relationship between industrial development, trade and investment;

We hereby declare the following:

6. We stress the need for all WTO members to strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system to support trade and development. It is critical that all WTO Members avoid unilateral and protectionist measures that run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO. BRICS members underscore the importance of focusing on trade matters that fall under the competence of the WTO.

7. We will actively participate to ensure the WTO reform is framed in a balanced manner, including in relation to agenda setting which must take into account the interests and concerns of all members, while considering that developing countries including LDCs constitute the majority of WTO membership. The reform process should be open, transparent, inclusive and in accordance with the objectives and principles enshrined in Marrakesh Agreement. The WTO reform shall preserve its core values and fundamental principles and enhance its relevance in global economic governance. The WTO reform must preserve the pre-eminent role of the WTO for setting global trade rules and governance, supporting the inclusive development and promoting the rights and interests of its members, including developing members and LDCs. We recognize that special and

differential treatment is a tool to facilitate the achievement of WTO objectives with respect to economic growth and development.

8. We emphasize the top priority and urgency of launching the selection process of the Appellate Body members to restore the binding two-tier multilateral dispute settlement mechanism. We agree that the Appellate Body crisis should be resolved without further delay and should not be linked with other issues.

9. We reaffirm our commitment to a successful 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), an important opportunity to restore trust among members, raise confidence in the multilateral trading system and enhance the credibility of the WTO. We call on WTO members to sustain momentum and to build on progress already achieved with a view to reaching tangible, realistic, and meaningful outcomes at MC12 including on the mandated issues of negotiations.

10. We express deep concern about the negative impact of COVID-19 on global trade, disruptions to supply chains, and uneven economic recovery. We call for enhanced international cooperation including in the WTO to fight the pandemic, to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, as well as diagnostics and therapeutics, to bridge the international "vaccine divide", to promote technology transfer. We call on a comprehensive outcome on the WTO response to Covid-19 encompassing all aspects of the issue, including the temporary TRIPS waiver proposal, improving transparency and monitoring, advancing

facilitation, aimed at enhancing cooperation on fighting COVID-19.

11. We urge all WTO Members to work constructively to achieve meaningful outcomes in line with the mandate and ensure timely conclusion of the fisheries subsidies negotiations by MC12. We recognize that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment is a tool to economic growth and development for developing members and should be an integral part of the negotiations.

12. We call for continuing the reform process to achieve fair and balanced rules for agriculture. We also recognize the importance of existing ministerial mandates. These matters have become increasingly urgent in the context of growing food insecurity in the world.

13. Underline that all measures taken to tackle climate change and bio diversity loss must be designed, adopted and implemented in full conformity with the WTO agreements and must not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade and must not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. We express our concern at any discriminatory measure that will distort international trade, risk new trade frictions and shift the burden of addressing climate change to other trading partners, developing countries and BRICS members.

14. We agree to enhance communication among BRICS missions to the WTO in order to deepen understanding.