

**Media statement following the meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations on the margins of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 20 September 2023**

1. The BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations held their annual meeting on the margins of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) on 20 September 2023, chaired by the Russian Federation in its capacity as the incoming BRICS Chair for 2024.
2. The Ministers exchanged views on major global and regional issues on the United Nations (UN) agenda in the political, security, economic, financial, and sustainable development spheres, as well as on intra-BRICS activities. The Ministers discussed the possibilities for mutual support of their initiatives at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly. They expressed support for continued cooperation of BRICS countries in areas of mutual interest, including through regular exchanges amongst their Permanent Missions to the UN.
3. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to strengthening multilateralism and upholding international law, including the Purposes and Principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN) as its indispensable cornerstone, and the central role of the UN in an international system in which sovereign states cooperate to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development, ensure the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and promoting cooperation based on the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect, justice and equality.
4. The Ministers reiterated concern about the use of unilateral coercive measures which are incompatible with the Principles of the UN Charter and produce negative effects notably in the developing world. They reiterated their commitment to enhancing and improving global governance by promoting a more agile, effective, efficient, representative, democratic and accountable international and multilateral system and to facilitate greater and more meaningful participation of developing and least developed countries, especially in Africa, in global decision-making processes and structures and make them better attuned to contemporary realities and serve the interests of the global majority.
5. The Ministers recalled that 2023 is the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on 10 December 1948, as well as the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.
6. The Ministers reiterated the need for all countries to cooperate in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms under the principles of equality

and mutual respect. They agreed to continue to treat all human rights including the right to development in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. They agreed to strengthen cooperation on issues of common interests both within BRICS and in multilateral fora including the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council, taking into account the necessity to promote, protect and fulfil human rights in a non-selective, non-politicised and constructive manner and without double standards. They called for the respect of democracy and human rights and underlined that they should be implemented on the level of global governance as well as at national level. They reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all with the aim to build a brighter shared future for the international community based on mutually beneficial cooperation.

7. The Ministers supported a comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more democratic, representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of developing countries in the Council's memberships so that it can adequately respond to prevailing global challenges, and supported the legitimate aspirations of emerging and developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, including Brazil, India and South Africa, to play a greater role in international affairs, in particular in the United Nations, including its Security Council.

8. The Ministers called for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner by mobilising the means required to implement the 2030 Agenda. They further reaffirmed the call for donor countries to honour their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments and to facilitate capacity building and the transfer of technology along with additional development resources to developing countries, in line with the national policy objectives of recipients. They welcomed in this regard the Sustainable Development Goals Summit held in New York 18-19 September 2023 and reiterated that the Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024 would also constitute a significant opportunity for renewing international commitments on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Ministers reaffirmed their willingness to support Africa in the areas of industrialization, agriculture and skills development.

9. The Ministers also emphasized the importance of the role of the G20 in the global governance system as premier multilateral forum in the field of economic and financial cooperation that comprises developed countries and emerging markets and developing countries on an equal and mutually beneficial footing where major economies jointly seek solutions to global challenges. In this context, they expressed their firm view that the G20 should continue to function in a productive manner, focusing on the delivery of concrete outcomes, taking decisions by consensus. They

commended the successful hosting of the 18th G20 Summit in New Delhi under the Indian G20 Presidency and welcomed the African Union as a permanent member of the G20. They noted the opportunities to build sustained momentum for change by India, Brazil and South Africa presiding over the G20 from 2023 to 2025 and expressed support for continuity and collaboration in their G20 presidencies and wished them all success in their endeavours. Therefore, they reiterated their commitment to a balanced approach by continuing to amplify and further integrate the voice of the global South in the G20 agenda as under the Indian Presidency in 2023 and the Brazilian and South African Presidencies in 2024 and 2025.

10. The Ministers reiterated the importance of BRICS countries working together to deal with risks and challenges to the world economy in promoting global recovery, attaining food security, eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. They recognised that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. They emphasised the continued implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025, the Implementation Roadmap on Trade and Investment related aspects hereof, BRICS Digital Economy Partnership Framework, the Action Plan 2021-2024 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS Countries, as well as the Strategy on Food Security Cooperation of the BRICS Countries. They welcomed the United Nations declaration of 2023 the International Year of Millets.

11. The Ministers reiterated that the objectives, principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, including the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, must be honoured. They reaffirmed that the Means of Implementation should be enhanced urgently by developed countries, including through new, additional, predictable, adequate and timely flow of affordable Climate Finance, Technical Cooperation, Capacity Building and Transfer of Technology for climate actions. They reiterated the need for comprehensive financial arrangements to address loss and damage due to climate change, including operationalising the Fund on Loss and Damage as agreed at the UNFCCC COP27 to benefit all developing countries. They agreed to work together for a successful COP28 in Dubai in 2023 and welcomed Brazil's candidacy to host COP30 in 2025.

12. The Ministers reiterated that equal efforts, with the developed countries taking the lead, are required to combat the challenges of biodiversity loss and pollution; guided by the founding pillars of Rio Declaration and including CBDR-RC, more responsibility by the developed countries, and ensuring sustainable patterns of production and consumption. They also underlined the need to urgently accelerate

actions to address development and climate challenges, promote lifestyle for sustainable development, and conserve biodiversity.

13. The Ministers welcomed the historic adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-15) in December 2022. They thus undertook to strive towards the implementation of all the global goals and targets of the KMGBF, in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and national circumstances, priorities and capabilities in order to achieve its mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and vision of living in harmony with nature. They urged developed countries to provide adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the KMGBF. They also acknowledged the potential for cooperation on the sustainable use of biodiversity in business to support local economic development, industrialisation, job creation, and sustainable business opportunities.

14. The Ministers noted the increasing relevance of the interface between sustainable development and global health issues, while recognizing that international health cooperation shall be inclusive, based on equity and result-oriented for the benefit of all people.

15. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to intensify efforts towards improving equitable access and the collective capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, and strengthening the ability to fight back any such pandemics in the future collectively. In this regard, they reiterated the importance of the BRICS Virtual Vaccine Research and Development Center. They highlighted the UN High-Level Meetings on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response on 20 September 2023, on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) on 21 September 2023 and on the Fight against Tuberculosis on 22 September 2023 as critical steps for mobilizing international support.

16. The Ministers expressed their concern about ongoing conflicts in many parts of the world. They reiterated their commitment to the peaceful resolution of differences and disputes through dialogue and inclusive consultations in a coordinated and cooperative manner and supported all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of crises. They reiterated the need for full respect of international humanitarian law and the provision of humanitarian aid in accordance with the basic principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence established in UNGA resolution 46/182.

17. The Ministers commended continued collective efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and sub-regional organisations, including in particular the cooperation between the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and

Security Council, to address regional challenges including maintaining peace and security, promoting peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and development, and called for continued support by the international community to these endeavours using diplomatic means such as dialogue, negotiations, consultations, mediation, and good offices, to resolve international disputes and conflicts, settle them on the basis of mutual respect, compromise, and the balance of legitimate interests. They reiterated that the principle “African solutions to African problems” should continue to serve as the basis for conflict resolution on the continent.

18. The Ministers recalled their national positions concerning the conflict in and around Ukraine as expressed at the appropriate fora, including the UN Security Council and General Assembly, and noted with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

19. The Ministers expressed strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed. They recognized the threat emanating from terrorism, extremism conducive to terrorism and radicalization. They committed to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the cross-border movement of terrorists, and terrorism financing networks and safe havens. They reiterated that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. They reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to contribute further to the global efforts of preventing and countering the threat of terrorism on the basis of respect for international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and human rights, emphasizing that States have the primary responsibility in combating terrorism with the United Nations continuing to play central and coordinating role in this area. They also stressed the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach of the whole international community to effectively curb the terrorist activities, which pose a serious threat, including in the present-day pandemic environment. They rejected double standards in countering terrorism and extremism conducive to terrorism. They called for an expeditious finalization and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the UN framework and for launching multilateral negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, at the Conference of Disarmament. They welcomed the activities of the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group and its five Subgroups based upon the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan. They looked forward to further deepening counter-terrorism cooperation.

20. The Ministers recalled the 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) and the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference and acknowledged the annual UNGA resolution on “Combating glorification of Nazism,

neo-Nazism, and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”.

21. The Ministers reasserted their support for ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and of its weaponization, including through negotiations to adopt a relevant legally binding multilateral instrument. They recognized the value of the updated Draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2014. They stressed that practical and non-binding commitments, such as Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs) may also contribute to PAROS.

22. The Ministers called for the strengthening of disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), recognizing its role in safeguarding and for preserving their integrity and effectiveness to maintain global stability and international peace and security. They underlined the need to comply with and strengthen the BTWC, including by adopting a legally binding Protocol to the Convention that provides for, inter alia, an efficient verification mechanism.

23. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion of an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT-environment, underscored the importance of enhancing common understandings and intensifying cooperation in the use of ICTs and Internet. They supported the leading role of the United Nations in promoting constructive dialogue on ensuring ICT-security, including within the UN Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025, and developing a universal legal framework in this realm. They called for a comprehensive, balanced, objective approach to the development and security of ICT products and systems. They underscored the importance of establishing legal frameworks of cooperation among BRICS countries on ensuring security in the use of ICTs. They also acknowledged the need to advance practical intra-BRICS cooperation through implementation of the BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on ensuring security in the use of ICTs and the activities of the BRICS Working Group on security in the use of ICTs. While emphasising the formidable potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for growth and development, they recognised the existing and emerging possibilities they bring for criminal activities and threats, and expressed concern over the increasing level and complexity of criminal misuse of ICTs. They welcomed the ongoing efforts in the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on

countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes and reaffirmed their commitment to cooperating in the implementation of the mandate adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 75/282 in a timely manner.

24. The Ministers emphasised the responsible and ethical development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for socio-economic development and inclusive growth of all societies. They supported communication and cooperation on AI technology to promote mutual benefits, called for strengthening AI international governance and encouraged policy exchanges and dialogues on AI, with a view to exploring to establish an effective global governance framework with the aim to protect human rights and spur innovation and economic growth.

25. The Ministers underscored that the participation of BRICS countries in the work of the UN Security Council, including Brazil as an elected member for the period 2022-2023, is a valuable opportunity to further enhance the weight of BRICS dialogue on issue of international peace and security and for continued cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

26. The Ministers underscored the importance of sustained efforts aimed at making the United Nations more effective and efficient in implementing its mandates. They encouraged further cooperation 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 strengthening the Organization.

27. The Ministers recalled the consensus during the XV BRICS Summit on guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures on the BRICS expansion process and the decision on inviting the Argentine Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to become full members of BRICS from

1 January 2024. They welcomed the ongoing work by South Africa in its capacity as BRICS Chair in this regard. They will engage actively on the basis of full consultation and consensus to further develop the partner country model and a list of prospective partner countries and will report by the next Summit.

28. The Ministers commended South Africa as Chair of BRICS in 2023 and expressed their warm appreciation of the success of the XV BRICS Summit held from 22 to 24 August 2023 in Johannesburg, South Africa, including the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue as a testimony to openness and inclusiveness of the BRICS Partnership.

29. The Ministers recalled paragraph 88 of the Johannesburg II Declaration which tasked the Sherpas to continue discussions on a regular basis on BRICS institutional development, including on consolidation of cooperation.

30. The Ministers were briefed on the preparations for Russia's upcoming BRICS Chairship in 2024. Brazil, India, China and South Africa extended their full support to Russia for its BRICS Chairship in 2024 under the theme “Strengthening of multilateralism for the purposes of just global development and security” and the holding of the XVI BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. The Ministers also look forward to the Standalone Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations in Russia in 2024.