

THE STRATEGY FOR BRICS ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

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Welfare for everyone, development for all

«We envision a future marked by global peace, economic and social progress and enlightened scientific temper. We stand ready to work with others, developed and developing countries together, on the basis of universally recognized norms of international law and multilateral decision making, to deal with the challenges and the opportunities before the world today. Strengthened representation of emerging and developing countries in the institutions of global governance will enhance their effectiveness in achieving this objective» (Delhi Declaration).

«We are ready to explore new areas towards a comprehensive cooperation and a closer economic partnership to facilitate market inter-linkages, financial integration, infrastructure connectivity as well as people-to-people contacts» (Fortaleza Declaration).

I. Preamble

BRICS is a dialogue and cooperation platform among Member States (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) which together account for 30% of global land, 43% of global population and 21% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 17.3% of global merchandise trade¹, 12.7% of global commercial services² and 45% of world's Agriculture Production³. This platform aims to promote peace, security, prosperity and development in multipolar, interconnected and globalized world. The BRICS countries represent Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, which gives their cooperation a transcontinental dimension making it especially valuable and significant.

The BRICS plays a vital role in the world economy in terms of total production, receiving investment capital, and expanding potential consumer markets. The BRICS economies have been widely regarded as the engines of the global economic recovery, which underscores the changing role of these economies in the world. At the G20' meetings, the BRICS was influential in shaping macroeconomic policies in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis.

At the Summits in Sanya, Delhi, Durban and Fortaleza the BRICS Leaders agreed to build a partnership, in pursuit of increased stability, growth and development. In view of this, BRICS countries should develop pragmatic economic cooperation and forge closer economic partnership in order to

¹ From WTO statistics gateway

² From WTO statistics gateway

³ FAO Stat

contribute to promoting global economic recovery, reduce potential risks in the international financial markets and increase economic growth among its members.

I.1 Purposes

BRICS cooperation is aimed at complementing and strengthening existing bilateral and multilateral relations between Member States. The Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership (referred hereinafter as the BRICS Strategy) will contribute to increasing the economic growth and competitiveness of the BRICS economies in the global arena. The purposes of the BRICS Strategy are:

- to enhance market access opportunities and facilitate market inter-linkages;
- to promote mutual trade and investment and create a business-friendly environment for investors and entrepreneurs in all BRICS countries;
- to enhance and diversify trade and investment cooperation that support value addition among the BRICS countries;
- to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination and build resilience to external economic shocks;
- to strive for inclusive economic growth, in order to eradicate poverty, address unemployment and promote social inclusion;
- to promote information exchange through BRICS Virtual Secretariat and BRICS Economic Exchange Platform, as well as other agreed platforms;
- to consolidate efforts in order to ensure a better quality of growth by fostering innovative economic development based on advanced technologies and skills development with a view to build knowledge economies;
- to seek further interaction and cooperation with non-BRICS countries and international organizations and forums. BRICS members will engage with the business communities in their respective countries to implement the Strategy. They will encourage closer collaboration of BRICS business communities.

I.2 Basic Principles

The BRICS Strategy is based on the following principles:

- full respect for the sovereignty of the Member States;
- commitment to international law and recognition of the central role of the United Nations on peace, security and development;
- account for national interests, priorities, growth and development strategies of the Member States;
- openness, sharing of information and consensus in decision-making;
- commitment to the rules and principles of the multilateral trading system as embodied in the World Trade Organization (WTO);
- recognition of the multipolar nature of the global economic and financial system;
- support for greater exchanges of best practices in enhancing business environment;
- transparency and predictability in the investment environment in line with national policies and priorities;
- commitment to supporting sustainable development, strong, balanced and inclusive growth, financial stability, and balanced combination of measures ensuring social and economic development and protection of the environment;
- commitment to mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries;
- inadmissibility of unilateral economic sanctions in violation of universally recognized norms of international relations.

II. Priority areas for cooperation

II.1 Trade and investment

To achieve sustainable, inclusive and dynamic growth, the BRICS countries should avail themselves of opportunities provided by international

economic cooperation, including deepening of trade and investment ties, both within BRICS and with other members of the international community. More active intra-BRICS trade and investment cooperation will contribute to economic growth, and facilitate the use of existing opportunities of BRICS economic complementarity. It will also strengthen the positions of the Member States in the global economy and contribute to addressing domestic economic and social challenges, including job creation and promotion of social inclusion.

BRICS cooperation should be commensurate with the potential and make ample use of the capabilities of its Members and contribute to growth and sustainable development of their economies. BRICS cooperation will help to address emerging challenges to trade and investment, against the backdrop of weak global recovery and other potential risks. Of particular importance is the need to promote value-added trade amongst BRICS countries by focusing on the outcomes of Joint Trade Study.

In order to expand trade and investment cooperation the following goals should be pursued:

- enhancing consultations on macroeconomic and trade policies;
- encouraging trade and investment links between BRICS countries with an emphasis on promoting market access on goods and services amongst BRICS countries and supporting industrial complementarities, sustainable development and inclusive growth;
- simplifying and increasing the efficiency of administrative procedures to facilitate and accelerate mutual trade and investment;
- improving the transparency of trade and investment climate in the framework of international obligations and national legislation;
- creating favorable conditions for development of mutual trade and foreign direct investment in the BRICS countries in order to diversify production and exports;
- encouraging increased cooperation and trade in services, considering the positive impact on productivity and efficiency, including in the manufacturing sector;
- exchanging information on policies impacting trade and investment;

- increasing the share of value-added products in the GDP of the BRICS countries; and enhancing their resilience against fluctuations in the world commodity markets;
- promoting complementarity of production factors such as capital, labour, technology and natural resources;
- using extensively human capacity building mechanisms to increase production capacity and exports of the Member States;
- contributing to the creation and development of hi-tech industries in accordance with the respective trends and requirements of economic growth in the 21st century;
- developing cooperation on social, economic and competition policies;
- promoting the exchange of best practices in corporate social responsibility;
- strengthening customs cooperation, including simplification of customs clearance procedures, exchange of information on national customs law, as well as exchange of best practices;
- cooperating on standardization and conformity assessment through exchange of information, consultations and enquiries based on norms, experience and practices of international organizations, and coordination within those organizations;
- attracting investors and exploring implementation of co-financed projects in infrastructure, as well as in processing and mining industries, including regional projects;
- creating conditions for the BRICS companies, in particular for micro-, small and medium (MSMEs), to be better integrated into the global value chains with higher added value;
- promoting cooperation between MSMEs, including consideration of a BRICS MSMEs Cooperation Agreement, exchange of information and best practices on MSMEs regulation and support, facilitation of MSMEs' access to public services, financing, exports and international projects;

- attracting and promoting investment into Special Economic Zones within BRICS countries;
- developing areas of collaboration of start up projects with participation of entrepreneurs of BRICS countries;
- exchanging experience on programmes directed towards the integration of targeted groups (such as youth, women, socially and economically disadvantaged strata and people with disabilities) and rural communities into the mainstream economy;
- promoting business cooperation through appropriate channels, including through the BRICS Business Council, annual business forums, the Exchanges Alliance, the Interbank Cooperation Forum;
- enhancing communication, cooperation and information exchange regarding legal framework, enforcement and other aspects in the area of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs);
- promoting e-commerce development and cooperation.

To achieve these objectives the BRICS countries should:

- promote dialogue on BRICS countries' domestic investment policy and on approaches to investment agreements;
- strengthen cooperation among organizations responsible for investment facilitation;
- develop public-private partnerships as a mechanism of attracting additional resources; combining the capabilities of public and private sectors in the BRICS countries on implementing technologically advanced projects, including infrastructure projects;
- explore the possibility of implementing co-financed projects, including regional projects aimed at infrastructure development;
- promote cooperation between customs authorities;

- communicate and coordinate cooperation among Port Administration Departments;
- explore opportunities to identify and harness marine and coastal economic activities which are likely to be economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable;
- develop information exchange on existing trade and investment opportunities ensuring the availability of information to business community; create infrastructure for distributing information on investment opportunities;
- enhance cooperation amongst national statistical authorities in data sharing, collection and analysis through the appropriate mechanisms, such as BRICS Heads of National Statistical Institutions Meeting;
- establish cooperation among the respective Ministries, agencies and organizations responsible for MSMEs, particularly with a view to promoting their mutual exchanges and cooperation for facilitating innovation, technology transfer, research and development, including organization of joint international seminars, forums, conferences, fairs, etc.;
- encourage the BRICS Business Council to strengthen and build upon the existing MSME portal which bridges the information gap and eases accessibility of support services to MSMEs;
- develop a short-period mobility programme for young entrepreneurs and scientists of BRICS countries, particularly in the areas of technology and innovation;
- coordinate efforts in arranging exhibitions, industry conferences, round tables and business missions on a regular basis with a view to establish partnerships, initiate projects and inform partners on available business opportunities, including exploring possible joint exhibition of BRICS countries in international trade fairs and organizing possible annual BRICS Trade Fairs;
- enhance cooperation on intellectual property rights;
- increase cooperation and trade in key services.

II.2 Manufacturing and minerals processing

BRICS countries consider the manufacturing sector as one of the most important sources of growth, it may change the structure of the economy, create new jobs, raise the quality of labour and living standards. Growth in production and export of value added goods would provide BRICS economies with an opportunity to gain greater benefits from international cooperation and increase their role in global value chains and raise the level of their competitiveness.

Economic growth attributed to the development of industry and mining will facilitate the strengthening of economic ties between the BRICS countries. It will be based on the development of advanced technologies, innovations as well as downstream value addition through the engagement of public and private sectors as appropriate in the implementation of national development programs, as well as international industrial cooperation and partnerships in the BRICS countries.

Interaction among BRICS countries aimed at technological and industrial development should cover:

- promoting dialogue and practical cooperation in the optimal use of value chains;
- cooperation in raising the technological level of traditional industries;
- cooperation in developing new hi-tech engineering industries and innovation;
- cooperation in the development of technologies, capital goods and machinery related to manufacturing and minerals processing, creating favorable conditions for the BRICS countries to enhance mutual supplies of modern equipment necessary for the development of hi-tech industries, including those based on mineral raw materials;
- attracting investments of the BRICS Member States to minerals processing and machinery and equipment manufacturing;
- cooperation on creating and operating BRICS industrial parks and clusters;

- joint development and application of clean and environmentally friendly industrial technologies;
- promotion of beneficiation of minerals and metals at source for use in traditional and new hi tech industries.

To achieve these goals the BRICS countries should:

- broaden cooperation in the field of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including educational exchange, on-site training, joint programs including in high-tech engineering industries and engineering as well as management to develop a joint expertise on management and technical studies in a multicultural perspective, taking into account the need to transfer trust and competence;
- encourage development of the BRICS Consolidated Technology Platform introduced by UNIDO/BRICS project in order to contribute to sustainable economic development.

II.3 Energy

Promoting sustainable energy production and consumption is crucial for economic development of the BRICS countries. Balance of interests, transparency and predictability of supply and demand are the priority, given the unequal distribution of conventional energy sources and their limited reserves, coupled with the substantial increase in energy consumption in the developing countries.

Given the growing demand for energy sources, energy-efficient, clean, and environmentally friendly technologies, the BRICS countries stress the importance of sharing experience in the areas related to energy planning, production and consumption, and promoting mutual energy cooperation.

In order to enhance their energy security, BRICS countries should address the following priority areas:

- enhancing awareness of the needs of the energy-producing and energy-consuming countries;
- rendering mutual support for diversification of energy supplies;

- developing energy infrastructure;
- promoting universal access to energy;
- increasing energy efficiency, including joint development and sharing of energy efficient and cleaner energy technologies;
- introducing environmentally friendly technologies of energy production, storage and consumption;
- promoting the use of renewable sources of energy;
- improving the utilization of clean energy sources such as natural gas.

To achieve these goals BRICS countries should:

- promote efficient and environmentally friendly use of fossil fuels in the BRICS countries, including through cooperation in exploration and development of technologies aimed at hard-to-recover resources extraction;
- expand long-term energy supplies;
- establish regular energy dialogue between the BRICS countries in order to discuss long-term and medium-term strategies and energy security issues;
- encourage cooperation for the investments in energy projects in BRICS countries, including projects aimed at oil and gas exploration, energy infrastructure development;
- encourage research on practical implementation of sustainable development initiatives in the BRICS countries, taking into account national interests, including through the BRICS Think-Tanks Council and Academic Forum;
- create the conditions and accelerate the development as well as transfer of energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies and equipment;

- strengthen cooperation between public and private sector to stimulate investment in energy efficient technologies;
- conduct research and development (R&D) and studies on advanced energy technologies in sectors of mutual interest which contribute to increase in energy efficiency;
- broaden cooperation in the field of educational programs, exchange of information on national policies and practices, conducting conferences, exhibitions, workshops and seminars, through collaborative efforts;
- exchange statistical data and forecasts of development of the national energy systems, as well as information on best practices and energy regulatory frameworks.

II.4 Agricultural cooperation

BRICS countries as large agricultural producers play an important role in the global agriculture market. BRICS countries also provide a fundamental contribution to food security and nutrition, given that a sizeable majority of the 209 million people who have been lifted out of food insecurity in the past two decades reside in the BRICS countries.⁴

Cooperation among BRICS countries will strengthen world food security through sustainably increasing agricultural production and raising the level of productivity in agricultural sector, providing better investment conditions and transparency of the markets, promoting better living standards and access to food.

BRICS cooperation in the area of food security and nutrition and agriculture development will include, in its five priority areas:

Development of a general strategy for ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable population

- exchange of experience in public policies and programmes for food security and nutrition and the strengthening of family farming; elaboration of a General Strategy for ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable populations of BRICS and other developing countries, including through an effective public stock holding policy;

⁴ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014.

- maintain coordination and dialogue on issues discussed by the FAO governing bodies on information systems such as Agricultural Marketing Information System (AMIS) and on cooperation in the humanitarian field of food assistance, as well as on issues discussed at the Committee on World Food Security;
- cooperate on increasing productivity and sustainability of agricultural production;

Trade and investment promotion

- promote trade and investment in the agricultural sector through participation in exhibitions, trade fairs and investment fora;
- support the creation of substantially improved market access, elimination of export subsidies and significant reduction of the level of trade distorting domestic support;
- ensure safety of food products;
- establish cooperation agreements and arrangements among BRICS countries, with a view to facilitate greater access to their agricultural markets;
- strengthening food safety including through exchange of relevant information;
- cooperation among agencies responsible for sanitary and phytosanitary control;
- exchanging views on labeling rules;
- implementation of joint investment projects in agriculture subject to foreign direct investment policy of the Member States;

Basic Agricultural Information Exchange System

- work towards the development of a Basic Agricultural Information Exchange System of BRICS countries, bearing in mind its possible linkage with AMIS in order to avoid unnecessary duplications;

Agricultural technology cooperation and innovation

- intensify cooperation in the areas of agricultural science, technology, innovation and capacity building, including technologies for smallholder farming;

Reduction of negative impact of climate change on food security and adaptation of agriculture to climate change

- enhance cooperation and continue exchanging information and sharing experiences on relevant national policies, programs, plans and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

II.5 Science, Technology and Innovation

Science, Technology and Innovation play a central role in promoting inclusive macroeconomics and social policies and in addressing challenges to humankind posed by the need to simultaneously achieve growth, inclusiveness, environmental protection and preservation. BRICS should harness bilateral synergies to accelerate sustainable development of the five members. The central modalities of this cooperation should be sharing and exchanging information on science, technology and innovation policies and strategies; leveraging contacts and programmes aimed at enhancing collaborative innovation projects among BRICS countries; and the formulation of joint long-term problem-focused cooperation programmes. Their cooperation should be based on the principles of voluntary participation, equality, mutual benefit, reciprocity and subject to the availability of resources for collaboration by each country and having in mind the variable geometry of the research and development systems of the BRICS member countries.

BRICS scientific, technological and innovative cooperation will be carried out as per the provisions of the agreed “MoU on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation” and the overarching vision for implementation of this MoU by BRICS STI ministerial meetings.

The main areas of BRICS cooperation in STI should, inter alia, include:

- Exchange of information on policies and programmes and promotion of innovation and technology transfer;

- Food security and sustainable agriculture;
- Natural disasters;
- New and renewable energy, energy efficiency;
- Nanotechnology;
- High performance computing;
- Basic research;
- Space research and exploration, aeronautics, astronomy and earth observation;
- Medicine and biotechnology;
- Biomedicine and life sciences (biomedical engineering, bioinformatics, biomaterials);
- Water resources and pollution treatment;
- High tech zones/science parks and incubators;
- Technology transfer;
- Science popularization;
- Information and communication technology;
- Clean coal technologies;
- Natural gas and non-conventional gases;
- Ocean and polar sciences;
- Geospatial technologies and its applications.

To achieve these goals the BRICS countries should:

- promote research in the areas of common priority for the BRICS members;
- establish a strategic framework for cooperation in science, technology and innovation amongst the BRICS member countries supported by appropriate BRICS country funding mechanisms, instruments and national rules; and dedicate training programmes to support human capital development in science, technology and innovation, including short-term exchanges between scientists, researchers, technical experts and scholars;
- organize science, technology and innovation workshops, seminars and conferences in mutually agreed areas;

- facilitate access to science and technology infrastructure amongst BRICS member countries;
- engage in cooperation between respective national institutions of science, technology and innovation, research and development, and engineering in order to generate new knowledge and innovation industry, innovative products, services and processes in the BRICS member countries;
- exchange information on scientific and technological policy and programs;
- promote the development of environmentally friendly technologies;
- establish a joint Research and Innovation Networking Platform, aimed inter alia at facilitation of research collaboration;
- consider creating BRICS technology transfer network;
- support MSMEs in technology and innovation activities;
- promote the establishment of common technology platforms, innovation and technology clusters; joint development of high-tech zones / science parks and incubators; creating BRICS research and innovation centers;
- create BRICS Young Scientists Forum and promote involvement of youth in Innovation cooperation;
- exchange o experiences and practices in water management, including on rainwater harvesting, re-use and re-cycling of waste water;
- enhance cooperation on technology and innovation for natural disasters reduction among BRICS nations;

- set up a Disaster Management Centre for facilitating information/ data sharing on disasters and prediction techniques.

II.6 Financial cooperation

Financial issues are an important area of cooperation between BRICS countries and most of them are considered in the framework of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' process. The areas of cooperation include:

- establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, to supplement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development;
- establishment of the Contingent Reserve *Arrangement* (CRA) to contribute to strengthening the global financial safety net and complement existing international monetary and financial arrangements;
- exchange of views and sharing perspectives on the main issues on the G20 agenda, including measures to minimize negative spillovers in global economy and promote growth and job creation, investment and infrastructure, strengthening of the financial system and cooperation on tax matters, and etc.;
- advancing the reforms of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group (WBG) reforms;
- discussion on new topics of mutual interest which could include cooperation in the area of payment systems, in particular, oversight of payment systems and financial industry message standards.

In addition, BRICS countries' development banks will cooperate under the framework of Financial Forum.

II.7 Connectivity

Connectivity is an essential prerequisite for enhancing competitiveness. Strengthening connectivity represents a common necessity for all BRICS countries. Initiatives launched by BRICS countries are of significant importance for connectivity. Connectivity should be strengthened in a comprehensive, integrated and systematic way in key areas including policy coordination, infrastructure connection, trade, financial integration and people-to-people contacts.

II.7.1 Institutional connectivity:

Institutional Connectivity will advance regulatory and procedural cooperation and coherence among the BRICS countries through addressing trade facilitation issues and improving the coherence and interoperability of institutions, mechanisms, and processes. BRICS cooperation in this area should focus on:

- strengthening interaction among Customs and Border Administrations;
- exchange of ideas and experiences on the development of a Single Window;
- enhancing supply chain connectivity through identifying bottlenecks in regional supply chains so as to ensure more efficient and timely operation of supply chains
- promoting greater regulatory coherence and cooperation through coordination across regulatory standards and trade agencies and assessment of the impact of such regulations.

II.7.2 Physical connectivity:

Development of safe, balanced and dynamic transnational transportation and logistics systems is essential for economic growth of the BRICS countries. Efficient operation of the transportation system is crucial for international trade and integration in global production chains. Communication infrastructure, information and telecommunication technologies, as a key instrument of logistics system, also make a considerable contribution to accelerating growth and cost reduction.

The BRICS cooperation in these sectors is aimed at developing transportation and communication infrastructure and supporting mechanisms, including:

- exchange of information on measures and programs concerning transport and logistics policy, adoption of relevant long-term cooperation programs;
- business dialogue aimed at developing mechanisms of cooperation and exchange of best practices;
- support for transport and communication infrastructure development; search for technological, engineering and legal solutions to develop new international transport corridors in BRICS;
- use of innovative technologies to increase efficiency of transportation and logistics systems;
- promotion of energy efficiency and reduction of polluting emissions in the transportation sector;
- promotion of standardized digital data exchange systems in logistics to facilitate multimodal and intermodal transportation in the BRICS countries;
- cooperation and promotion of technologies of traffic safety control, transportation and infrastructure design, operation and monitoring;
- exchange of experience on development and use of innovative communication equipment, especially intelligent transportation systems and satellite navigation systems;
- development of public private partnership mechanisms, including in construction of highways, ports, airports, development of urban transport and railway infrastructure, subject to proper commercial viability and risk assessment;
- engagement of small and medium-sized enterprises into construction, logistics, maintenance of transportation and infrastructure facilities to address social and development challenges;

- harmonization of systems and processes in the transportation and logistics systems to allow seamless transfer of goods and passengers amongst BRICS countries including through use of ICT tools;
- cooperation in skills training for design, construction and operation of infrastructure facilities, implementation of joint research programs in the areas of content and application development, establishment of training centers networks in the area of information and communication technologies;
- exchange of experiences and practices with regard to efficient city transport systems, dynamic traffic control systems, efficient freight movement systems, and passenger-friendly services, etc.

To achieve these goals the BRICS countries should:

- hold meetings of high-ranking officials from public and private sectors when needed with the view to address current and emerging issues relating to BRICS performance in the field of transport infrastructure, logistics and communications, aimed at supply chain optimization;
- encourage cooperation and exchanges among media professionals from BRICS countries;
- encourage cooperation among BRICS countries' air carriers to enhance transportation efficiency and increase the number of direct flights;
- encourage BRICS countries enterprises to participate in competitive bidding, including joint bids, for infrastructure development;
- promote dialogue and information-sharing on increasing efficiency of railways infrastructure;
- exchange perspectives on satisfying urban mobility needs.

II.7.3 People-to-people connectivity:

Enhanced people-to-people connectivity will further stimulate interaction among BRICS countries, people and societies, promote business,

labour and academic mobility and tourism, and strengthen mutual understanding and friendship.

Education

Education has a strategic importance for sustainable development and inclusive economic growth. Through the accelerating progress in the educational field, the BRICS countries commit to attain the Post-2015 Development Agenda objectives and targets related to education and education-related Sustainable Development Goals to ensure equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning. The BRICS countries acknowledge that vocational and technical education addresses the challenge of integrating young people to the labour market and plays a critical role in preparing skilled workforce needed by the modern world.

Being strategic partners in this regard, the BRICS countries should forge close mutual links to improve the education from the earliest to the highest levels.

The main areas of BRICS educational cooperation should include:

- developing joint methodologies for education indicators;
- sharing best practices in terms of assessing learning outcomes;
- sharing concepts, methods and analytical tools to match demands and supply of vocational and technological education;
- developing higher education, with emphasis on mobility in graduate school, and research;
- establishing networks of researchers and developing joint projects in areas of mutual interest;
- establishing a BRICS University League (association of BRICS universities) and a BRICS Network University;
- exchanging experience and best practices in education;
- development of the skilled workforce needed by the BRICS industries;

- enhancing educational cooperation to strengthen regional ties and promote economic development through knowledge and skills transfer;
- promoting academic mobility, including student exchanges, among BRICS countries;
- exchanging of experiences in recognition of degrees and diplomas between BRICS countries;
- strengthening of higher education system and technical and vocational education and training (TVET);
- data sharing for measuring equity, inclusion and quality improvements based primarily on national assessments, administrative data and national household surveys as well as other data;
- development of joint methodologies for education indicators to support decision making in BRICS countries and provide technical support to the National Institutes of Statistics.

To achieve these goals the BRICS countries should:

- conduct joint scientific research and personnel training;
- share best practices in terms of assessing learning outcomes and report them in order to be useful for policy makers, universities and schools;
- share technical expertise, building linkages and identification and collaboration in addressing gaps in the areas of skill development, curriculum development and reform;
- share benchmark assessment, accreditation standards, and certification and training methods;
- share best practices in areas including policies on skills development, credit framework designs, occupational standards and apprenticeship models;
- prepare skilled workforce needed by the labour market, including through the TVET;

- create a working group to develop a report on the state of vocational and technical education and share concepts, methods and instruments of analysis to match demands and supply of TVET in BRICS countries;
- establish the networks of researchers and develop joint projects;
- establish BRICS University League;
- establish BRICS Network University;
- carry out joint activities on teacher training using also ICT, massive open online courses (MOOCs) and other digital initiatives;
- establish long-term cooperation mechanisms on education including BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting;
- explore credit transfer among BRICS universities.

Tourism

- create favorable conditions for long-term cooperation in the field of tourism for the mutual benefit of the BRICS Member States, in accordance with their national laws and regulations;
- engage in initiatives in the field of human resource development and cooperation to develop, upgrade and expand tourism and travel facilities and services between the BRICS countries;
- undertake efforts to create favorable conditions for the public and private sectors to engage more deeply in investments in tourism and travel between the BRICS countries;
- finalize a Memorandum of Understanding on Tourism.

Business and labour mobility

- facilitate the issuance of visas;
- strengthen occupational safety;

- initiate the modernization of enterprises and industries including through introducing new technologies aimed at creating favorable employment opportunities;
- ensure the fulfillment of workers' rights and protection;
- encourage exchanges among BRICS cultural industries;
- promote greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of each other's culture; explore areas of practical cooperation in this regard, including to implement the agreement on cultural cooperation.

II.8 ICT Cooperation

Information and communications technologies (ICTs), in particular the Internet and other media, can be powerful tools to provide instruments to foster sustainable economic progress and social inclusion. BRICS should strengthen cooperation and promote joint activities and initiatives to address common concerns in the field of ICTs. The main areas of BRICS ICT cooperation will include:

- cooperation on digital economy;
- development of contacts between BRICS IT/ITeS industries, strengthening cooperation among public private entities;
- exploring the full potential of ICTs, including the Internet, in the pursuit of the purposes of cooperation amongst BRICS;
- communication and cooperation of BRICS on emergency response to information security issues;
- cooperation within BRICS and in other relevant international fora on countering the use of ICTs for criminal and terrorist purposes;
- protection of critical ICT infrastructure and personal information;
- joint research on new technologies and services of information security;

- coordination on agreed ICTs and ICT-related security issues within relevant international organizations and fora;
- promotion of dialogue on internet governance;
- promotion of a peaceful, secure, open, trusted and cooperative digital and Internet space;
- cooperation among the BRICS countries through joint development of software and equipment in the IT-sphere, and promotion of projects in this field;
- consideration of incentives to attract investment and production in BRICS countries by global IT manufacturers and to address human resource and technology gaps through the system of international scientific and technological cooperation;
- promotion of innovative telecommunication equipment, development and introduction of new standards and technologies of communication to promote information/digital society and to resist cyber threats;
- development of cooperation to find new ways of reducing voice, internet and broadband cost; exchange of information and expertise, to contribute to cost reduction including policy and regulatory interventions and implementation;
- cooperation in skills training for design, construction and operation of infrastructure facilities, implementation of joint research programs in the areas of content and application development, establishment of training centers networks in the area of information and communication technologies;
- increase opportunities for the uptake and usage of technology through information exchange as well as joint R&D projects to promote growth in IT manufacturing, including through innovation.

To achieve these goals the BRICS countries should:

- constitute a working group on ICT cooperation to consider, inter alia, ways and measures to promote ICT-related issues and enhance regular interactions at the Ministerial and official levels;
- offer training programmes to support human capital development in information technology and innovation;
- exchange of expertise on information society policies and programs, for the equitable distribution of the benefits of the new technologies and services.

III. Interaction with international and regional economic organizations and fora

Development of intra-BRICS cooperation in various international and regional platforms is vital for the promotion of common interests in international trade, investment, industrial, scientific and technological cooperation. BRICS will strive to further strengthen its role in the global arena by communicating assessments on global macroeconomic situations and trade policies, through existing mechanisms, coordinating positions in international and regional organizations, associations and forums and developing outreach formats of interaction. Cooperation in multilateral bodies and organizations will complement bilateral economic ties among BRICS countries.

BRICS countries will continue to develop cooperation within the UN system as well as with other international economic organizations in accordance with the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

BRICS countries will continue to pursue reform of the global economic governance institutions and safeguard the interests of BRICS countries as well as other emerging and developing economies.

Participation of BRICS countries in the activities of regional organizations will strengthen their role as regional leaders; promote development, sustainable growth in respective regions and cross-regional cooperation.

III.1 BRICS and WTO

BRICS countries recognize the importance of international trade as a key to new jobs, sustained economic recovery as well as balanced growth and development. The BRICS members reaffirm the value, centrality and primacy of

the multilateral trading system in world trade regulation and their commitment to strengthen the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.

To that end, BRICS countries urge other countries to resist all forms of trade protectionism and disguised restrictions on trade while supporting the work of the WTO and other international organizations.

BRICS countries will strive to enhance their cooperation to create conditions for expansion and diversification of BRICS participation in global trade. They emphasize the need to coordinate and cooperate in the WTO to develop the Post-Bali work program, and express their strong support for the conclusion of the Doha Round.

III.2 BRICS and the G20

BRICS countries are committed to strengthening the G20 as a premier forum for international economic cooperation. They will continue to actively participate in the work of the G20, exchange views with the aim of further strengthening international financial and economic architecture and achieving strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth. BRICS countries will continue to coordinate and hold preparatory meetings ahead of main G-20 events.

IV. Implementation of the BRICS Strategy

The BRICS Strategy is adopted by the BRICS Leaders in 2015 in the city of Ufa, Russian Federation. The Sherpas will review the BRICS Strategy every five years, or earlier if deemed necessary. The Sherpas will annually report on the progress in the implementation of the BRICS Strategy to the BRICS Leaders.