

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH BRICS ACADEMIC FORUM TO THE LEADERS

BRICS NEW VISION FOR A BETTER WORLD

Delegates from five BRICS countries and over 200 international experts gathered in person in Moscow and online from around the world for the 12th BRICS Academic Forum in October 2020 and worked out the following conclusions and recommendations:

We the participants to the BRICS Academic Forum and members of the BRICS Think Tank Council (BTTC) highly appreciate the resolve of the BRICS leaders to continue permanent dialogue with the representatives of BRICS expert and academic community, to include the annual Academic Forum into the official calendar of the BRICS Chairmanship and ensure unhampered and productive exchange of ideas and recognition of the recommendations of the BRICS epistemic community.

BRICS Think Tank Council has undertaken the task of elaborating the BRICS Cooperation Progress Indicators (Annex 1) to offer in-depth analysis for the results achieved of the BRICS countries' pentilateral cooperation and its contribution to the general improvement of the five countries' global political weight, socio-economic-development and quality of life of its populations as well as look into further developments of the BRICS and its systemic influence on the global agenda. These indicators are offered for consideration of the BRICS leaders to provide for further solid basis of cooperation with the BTTC and the wider expert community to ensure incremental and beneficial progress of BRICS activities for its people and the world. We are also requesting the BRICS leaders to kindly consider possibility to ask relevant statistical agencies and other BRICS ministries and agencies to provide necessary support and work together with the epistemic community in preparing the evaluation on the basis of the BRICS Cooperation Progress Indicators.

BRICS in a New Governance Paradigm

1. Over the period since the previous Academic Forum, the world has become ever more dangerous, unpredictable with national egoisms often prevailing over common sense and human well-being, international turbulences rising and rivalries dominating the international agenda, multifaceted crises affecting each and every sphere of countries' development and citizens' lives. In such conditions, BRICS countries offer an example of mutual respect, commitment to multilateral cooperation, effective de-ideologized global governance without hegemonic ambitions. The five countries thus could be regarded as civilizational and cultural lynchpins in their respective regions and an example to follow to promote peaceful, fair and sustainable development.
2. While there are considerable differences between our countries and current transformations of the international system add to those divergences, the five States continue cooperation in the spirit of transparency, friendship and mutual respect. The BRICS do not seek to undermine the current global governance systems, but rather wish to reform it so that the benefits of globalization accrue for the common good.
3. BRICS epistemic community acknowledges that the modern world demonstrates unequal opportunities and rights exacerbated even more recently by the raging COVID-19 pandemic. It vests the BRICS countries with the responsibility to promote and support multiple narratives and ideas from across the spectrum of the global community in the spirit of inclusivity and oppose dominance of a single vision and approach.
4. BRICS epistemic community recalls that 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations as well as the end of the Second World War. We express our resolute stance against the rehabilitation of Nazi ideology, racism and xenophobia and the distortion of history and call on our leaders to support this stance.
5. BRICS countries are playing ever more active role on the global arena, take up higher responsibility and assume the proportionate burden in maintenance of the new multilateral world order. All the five countries remain committed to common values based on the principles of sovereignty, cultural diversity, plurality and strengthening international law against unilateral actions and fully support the idea of preserving and strengthening centrality of the United Nations while reaffirming 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.

6. We recognize that building a fair, just and inclusive international order requires engagement and outreach to the other states and parties committed to similar norms and principles, as well as intensifying further cooperation with and within the international organizations and forums, including the UN, the G20, WTO, WHO and others, building strong partnerships.
7. While it is true that BRICS started their cooperation primarily on the financial and economic issues, where the participating countries reached considerable progress with the creation of the New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement, as well as the implementation of the Strategy of BRICS Economic Partnership 2015 – 2020, BRICS by now has transformed into a comprehensive governance mechanism covering all the three pillars of interactions between the countries – politics and security, economy and finance, and culture and humanitarian exchanges.

International Security Issues

8. It should be acknowledged that multiple crises in different parts of the world combined with increased turbulence and geopolitical rivalry that accompany ongoing transition towards a fair polycentric international order present grave danger to peace and security for all nations. BRICS should be at the forefront of international efforts to safeguard peace and security globally and should act together as a grouping and within other international institutions to ensure conflict resolution through diplomatic means and inadmissibility of the use or threat of force.
9. BRICS epistemic community reiterate its call on the BRICS leaders to consider the earlier promoted idea of signing of the Declaration of principles and elaborating new legally binding Non-Aggression and Peaceful Coexistence Treaty¹ initiated by the BRICS but further on open to all states around the globe. In the spirit of comprehensive peace and security, BRICS should also set a global system of trust and promote confidence-building measures to overcome current pandemics of distrust and certain states proneness to unilateral actions and aggressive behavior.
10. BRICS should keep firm on their way to the world order based not on the notion of exclusivity, but principles of inclusivity, indivisibility of security for all, cooperative and sustainable security behavior, and

¹ See 7th BRICS Academic Forum Recommendations, Moscow, 2015

sovereign equality of all states. The nexus between peace, security and development should be undisputable, while new a type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation instead of building new dividing lines should be the only way forward.

11. BRICS should continue to cooperate to ensure that the international system is based on the United Nations Charter principles, supremacy of international law and norms and not the unilateral will of the strongest state or states.
12. BRICS should firmly condemn any illegal use of military force or other threats to the sovereignty of the other state, including unilateral illegal sanctions, and insist that the UN Security Council is the only international mechanism which has the authority to allow such use.
13. BRICS leaders should reiterate their support for the principle of non-interference into internal affairs of sovereign states and condemn any attempts to use any pretext in containment strategies and in “regime change” policies. Any promotion or encouragement of political coups from abroad is illegal and must not happen, as well as foreign support and recognition of illegal coups.
14. International terrorism remains one of the gravest security threats the international community faces. BRICS leaders should strongly condemn terrorism and support of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed, and reiterate their commitment to strong counter-terrorism cooperation. BRICS should add further to the global efforts of preventing and countering the threat of terrorism on the basis of respect for international law and the UN Charter, emphasizing that States have the primary responsibility in combating terrorism, and reiterate that countries must urgently consider expediting the finalization of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) under the UN umbrella as well as the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy agreed upon by the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) this September.
15. BRICS should continue bringing together their cumulative voice to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and prevention of arms race in outer space as well as contribute to the adoption of legally binding multilateral instruments that could fill the gap in the international legal regime applicable to outer space, including on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. Further cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, including through the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer

Space, would be highly valuable for all the BRICS countries and contribute to their sustainable development.

16. We stress the importance of an open, secure, stable, nondiscriminatory, accessible and peaceful environment for information and communications technologies (ICTs), and emphasize the need of a comprehensive and balanced approach to ICTs development and security, including technical advancement, business development, of safeguarding the security of States and public interests, and of respecting the right to privacy of individuals. We underscore the leading role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue to forge common understandings on the security of and in the use of ICTs and development of universally agreed norms, rules and principles for responsible behavior of States in the realm of ICTs, joint activities within Internet Governance Forum (IGF), International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and other relevant multilateral international fora should be undertaken. We urge leaders to seriously consider the Russian proposal on a BRICS intergovernmental agreement on cooperation on ensuring security in the use of ICTs and the Brazilian initiative towards bilateral agreements among BRICS countries on the matter. Intra-BRICS cooperation in this area remains of paramount importance, including through the implementation of the BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on Ensuring Security in the Use of ICTs. We acknowledge initiatives of individual BRICS countries both domestic and global on data security issues. BRICS should cooperate in developing a common approach to data security for prosperity and inclusive growth.
17. Organized crime, including drug traffic, remains a common problem for the BRICS states. Exchange of best practices among the BRICS States and partners and strengthened coordination within relevant international institutions should be continued within the BRICS.

Trade, economic and financial cooperation

18. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected almost all countries and spheres of human activity and pose new, unprecedented challenges to the world economy causing, inter alia, the disruption of established manufacturing, transportation and distribution chains. BRICS need to further consolidate strategy and build up mutual trust along with an increasing degree of complementarity among the five countries. They need to find new mechanisms to address each members' concern and improve the functioning and inclusive participation in regional and global supply chains affected by the pandemic and overcome the

current crisis. Closer cooperation between the BRICS would offer an opportunity to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis and to contribute to restoration of production, cross-border trade and cross-border investments, which in turn are all important factors for recovery of the global economy.

19. BRICS should foster pragmatic economic cooperation and forge a closer economic partnership with a view to strengthening the post-pandemic global economic recovery, reduce potential risks for global trade and investments, unleash the potential of digital technologies and promote sustainable development in the BRICS members. For these ends, the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership (SEP) 2020 – 2025, to be adopted at the XII BRICS Summit, should be implemented fully to unleash BRICS countries' potential and ensure innovative, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We believe that evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2015 – 2020 conducted by the BRICS Russia Expert Council and National Committee on BRICS Research with the assistance of the other BRICS National Coordinators contributed to a better understanding of the progress achieved and revealed problem areas needing attendance by the BRICS leaders to enhance BRICS cooperation and ensure lessons learned within the new edition of the BRICS SEP. We commit to further monitoring progress of the five countries within the BRICS SEP 2020 – 2025 framework and are ready to engage with the relevant authorities as well as BRICS business community to these ends.
20. We urge our governments to put further efforts to ensure a positive environment for investors operating in BRICS countries and for BRICS investors operating in other markets. It should be noted that with the role of the BRICS economies in the global restoration of international investment flows, appropriate instruments aimed at creating the favorable environment for investments at the domestic, intra-BRICS and international levels may promote international trade, sustainable development and inclusive growth.
21. BRICS countries should enhance transparency and streamline national administrative procedures and requirements critical to promote investments, as well as regulate investment in ways that would ensure that it supports national economic development priorities, including industrialization. BRICS should continue cooperation on technical assistance and capacity building provided to developing countries and LDCs on investment promotion and facilitation without prejudice to individual BRICS country's approaches to international investment-

related rulemaking, and for the preserve of BRICS country's policy space and their right to regulate.

22. Taking into account the increase in digital transactions, boosted by the pandemic there is the high importance of strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation on e-commerce by exchanging experience and good practices on various approaches to regulation of e-commerce, the BRICS E-commerce Working Group should be the primary cooperation mechanism in this regard. The expert community of the BRICS countries should combine their potential to establish a workstream to examine the experience of BRICS and other countries, as well as international associations in the field of consumer protection in e-commerce and create a basis for exploring the development of a practical framework for ensuring consumer protection in the BRICS countries including through pilot projects and initiatives.
23. BRICS should recognize the vital need to improve the business environment for BRICS Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which were among the worst-hit during the temporary lockdown measures introduced during the pandemic. To these ends BRICS relevant authorities, business and expert community need to exchange views and share best practices on measures and approaches to integrating MSMEs in the mainstream economy and international trade, noting the respective ongoing work in the relevant international fora.
24. BRICS industrial cooperation, including on new industrial infrastructure and standards, as well as to technological and innovation-oriented cooperation of BRICS countries with UNIDO proves to be very effective as shows the launch of the Internet platform for technology exchange among the BRICS countries with UNIDO assistance. Further strengthening of joint actions particularly in the post-pandemic environment, including in areas, outlined in the approved Work Plan of the PartNIR to foster collaboration among researchers, scientists, academic institutions, businesses and government bodies to encourage capacity building in cutting-edge technologies, identifying opportunities for collaboration on upskilling and reskilling programs related to the NIR and continue building the innovation ecosystem are of vital importance for the BRICS.
25. BRICS authorities should facilitate the establishment of BRICS industrial and science parks, innovation centers, technology business incubators and enterprises networks and facilitate collaboration between advanced manufacturing clusters.
26. The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) remains one of the key institutional achievements of BRICS cooperation. Opening of the

regional offices in all the BRICS countries should further facilitate work on relevant projects of the five countries. It is advised that the BRICS Think-Tank Council together with the BRICS Business Council joins efforts to provide for enhanced research in cooperation with the established regional offices of the NDB to ensure prompt and informed decision making on relevant projects vital for the sustainable development of the BRICS countries.

27. In order to keep up with new challenges and opportunities offered by the current volatile situation in the world economy and finance BRICS should focus its work on performing key tasks such as extending the use of local currencies in project funding and trade operations of member countries. We urge the BRICS relevant authorities to consolidate further efforts to promote mechanisms of intra-BRICS financial cooperation involving existing and newly formed institutions such as the BRICS Bond Fund in national currencies, BRICS Pay (Single Payment System of the BRICS Countries), etc.
28. Transparent, open, inclusive and nondiscriminatory rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied in the WTO, is vital for equitable development and global trade. While unilateral and protectionist actions of certain countries to undermine global trade regime is detrimental for sustainable development and inclusive growth, it is clear that there exists a need to pursue necessary WTO reform in order to allow for it to become more resilient and effective in confronting global economic challenges, including economic and trade consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as addressing imbalances and promoting inclusive growth and development. BRICS leaders should put collective efforts into such activities while preserving the centrality, core values and fundamental principles of the WTO.

Sustainable development in quality of life

29. BRICS countries should magnify their efforts to fully implement the Agenda for the Sustainable Development until 2030 while continuing their work on Voluntary National Reviews on the implementation and tracking progress of the Sustainable Development Goals and related objectives at national levels in the context of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, we urge BRICS relevant authorities to proceed with the development of their national indicators, following 2030 Agenda principle, according to which the goals are formulated as global wishes patterns. We encourage Member States to initiate mutual accountability mechanism to promote the full implementation of SDGs. Each

government should set its state objectives, taking into account national conditions and adhering them to global patterns, coordinating on the elaboration of a BRICS joint indicator system.

30. BRICS countries should be committed to building a BRICS community of health with the concept of “putting people and life first” and the rights to subsistence and development as primary and basic human rights. The current COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that humanity could survive only joining its efforts together, but also exposed weaknesses of national and international healthcare systems and offered extra focus on the challenge for the BRICS countries to establish high-quality universal resilient healthcare systems ready to weather this and other possible storms. We support necessary and reasonable reforms of the WHO to enhance its capacity in dealing with public health emergencies and to better play its core role in global public health governance. BRICS should exercise a leadership role within the WHO, other relevant international for and act on earlier initiatives, like that of the establishment of the Vaccine Development Center from the BRICS Johannesburg Summit. The five countries should develop a cooperation plan with a common approach to fighting new and old infectious diseases, especially those with pandemic potential, collaboration on the development of medicines and generic medicines, cooperating on antimicrobial resistance and providing for preventive healthcare and treatment of NCDs. BRICS countries should defend science and justice across the world, oppose politicizing COVID-19, and oppose any anti-intellectual approach in response to the pandemic.
31. The idea of joint BRICS project on engaging medical students and volunteers as contact-tracers to counter COVID-19 and other possible infectious diseases with pandemic potential should be studied by relevant BRICS authorities.
32. Rising healthcare challenges also bring another impetus for the BRICS to enhance research and development in support of next-generation pharmaceuticals and treatments, including use of nuclear medical technologies (anti-cancer isotopes, radiation therapies, etc.) and diagnostic equipment.
33. Environmental protection and climate change adaptation policies should remain an important area of BRICS international cooperation and intra-BRICS initiatives. BRICS governments should work closely with its epistemic community to ensure the adoption of long-term scientifically sound policies and efficient work within the relevant international global and regional institutions. Special environmental

sector could be promoted within the existing BRICS granting scheme to bring to life new BRICS joint projects and initiatives in the area of green development and environmental protection.

34. The five countries should enhance cooperation and promote best practice exchange in the area of adaptation mechanisms to global warming to reduce vulnerabilities and build the resilience of the BRICS countries to climate change. It is also vital that BRICS engage real sector economy into cooperation as a key actor offering a multi-stakeholder platform to coordinate diverse efforts for the common cause.
35. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digital Economy present multiple opportunities for the development of the BRICS countries serving as the driver of inclusive economic growth. At the same time, the benefits of digital transformation come with multiple risks from unequal digitalization, countries' regulatory differences, security threats, lack of trust and absence of universal governance mechanisms. BRICS should work independently and with the other international institutions and fora in order to bridge the existing digital divide and become leaders in digitalization, industrialization and innovation. The idea of a fair and equitable provision and governance of digital public goods should be pursued by BRICS.
36. Each of the BRICS members possesses vast remote and rural territories with the necessity to ensure equally sustainable and progressive development of the whole territory of the five countries. New digital technologies offer new opportunities for the social and economic advancement of all the regions of the BRICS. Thus, we welcome the preparation of the Databank of Best Practices on Development of Remote Areas in BRICS countries prepared by the BRICS Russia Expert Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia together with the National Committee on BRICS Research with the assistance from the National Coordinators from BTTC and urge relevant BRICS authorities to consider this study as a reference point for the best practices exchange and introduction of relevant policies and enhanced cooperation for sustainable steady development of BRICS countries' regions and overall improvement of quality of life of people in the BRICS.
37. BRICS labor markets, employment and income of populations were deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This puts an extra burden on the five governments to put every effort into restoration and further development of BRICS labor markets enhanced social dialogue and partnership on the issues of the governments, businesses and labor representatives.

38. Poverty alleviation remains one of the most important challenges. In our policy responses, we will continue to undertake targeted measures that seek to protect income and provide adequate support for all workers in need, regardless of their employment status, age or gender. BRICS should continue their efforts to support the creation of more decent jobs, including those provided by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, removing barriers faced by vulnerable groups who would like to enter the labor market and ensuring basic social protection for all.
39. BRICS countries' agricultural sector remains of paramount importance for overcoming problems of hunger and malnutrition. COVID-19 pandemics have also exposed high relevance of quality development of agricultural production and enhanced cooperation between the BRICS countries to provide for SDG achievement in the interest of the BRICS and global community and global food security.
40. Cooperation on energy issues should remain instrumental for the BRICS countries to promote unhampered innovative growth. We are ready to provide necessary expertise with regards to the implementation of the Roadmap for BRICS Energy Cooperation up to 2025 agreed by the BRICS Ministers of Energy in 2020. BRICS Energy Research Platform should be used as a central element of coordination of energy experts to provide for timely and relevant analysis on the issues of energy security, energy efficiency and green development.

Science, technology and innovation

41. The role of science, technology and innovation (STI) has been explicitly recognized as the main driver of sustainability and led to develop the capacity of BRICS to put science at the heart of their national and international strategies aimed at tackling global challenges. BRICS should further enhance their collaboration within the established structures and groups such as STI Architecture, iBRICS, BRICS GRAIN, BRICS VIP etc. BRICS STI framework to stimulate BRICS youth involvement like BRICS Young Scientists Forum, BRICS Leaders School and Contest and others should continue to receive support from the BRICS authorities, business and expert community and serve as a platform to promote and exacerbate BRICS progress within the global competition for high-quality technological development for the benefit of the BRICS people and globally.
42. Digital Technologies possess an enormous economic and social potential for the BRICS nations. However, their development is

associated with multiple regulatory and consumer risks and challenges, from privacy to gender and racial equality, criminal and terrorist threats. So, the BRICS countries should elaborate common approaches to the Legal and Ethical codes and, where possible, unified ethical and technical standards and protocols for the responsible development of Artificial Intelligence and other emerging digital technologies.

43. Blockchain is among the most advanced emerging technologies with a wide range of use, from the financial and corporate sector and up to use in public administration (e.g. blockchain-enhanced property registration, healthcare, etc.) and in green economy (carbon emission trade, control of carbon footprints along the value chains, etc.). Development of a unified set of approaches, digital/technological platforms, elaboration and exchange of best practices, and other efforts are needed in support of BRICS leadership in the blockchain realm.
44. Green energy and transportation technologies are already transforming markets and support more affordable clean energy and services for all. Smart infrastructures (cities, roads/traffic, grids, etc.) are the new frontier for greening the economy, making it more safe and secure, supporting inclusive economic growth, and unleashing creativity and endogenous innovations. BRICS should support bilateral and multilateral «smart infrastructure» research and development (also in software and internet applications areas), pilot projects, best practice sharing, rise of BRICS certification centers for smart solutions, as well as of common standards and model regulations in support of smart development of BRICS economies.
45. Chemistry and material science along with advanced IT are the main sources of technological development for the future. Considering ambitious industrial and innovation goals, as well as the challenge of greening the BRICS economies, it is necessary to initiate under BRICS auspices new systematic R&D and industrial projects for new biodegradable polymers and other green chemical technologies (catalyzers, etc.), «white» (industrial) biotechnology, and new environmentally friendly and affordable chemical and biotech products for the future of agriculture. Also, new projects in nuclear material science (use of synchrotron and other radiation for enhancing materials, etc.) are important in order to support BRICS high-tech industries.
46. There is ever-increasing importance of the development and usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the context of the unprecedented global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. BRICS countries should aim at providing and expanding access to digital infrastructure and services, in particular, but not limited, to offer electronic government services and digital health services for the population. Enhanced knowledge, information and experience sharing between the five countries, joint projects implementation and

strengthened cooperation between private and public entities are needed to provide for advancing development and BRICS international leadership in ICT area.

People-to-people contacts and humanitarian cooperation

47. Over the 12 years of existence, BRICS have turned into a comprehensive mechanism of cooperation not only at the official level but managed to penetrate every sphere of citizens' life and interactions. As a result, in addition to the BRICS Summit in Durban in 2013 and leaders' decision to establish BRICS Think Tank Council and BRICS Business Council, a number of other processes and formats have gained firm ground and contributed into the formation of the true BRICS entity. This process continues and solidifies BRICS activities and voice internationally and within the five countries. Nevertheless, in order to sustain progress achieved so far, BRICS should increase attention to the social and humanitarian aspects of the five countries.
48. Technological development and digitalization will continue transforming BRICS economies, creating new jobs while requiring transition for the workers who lost their jobs, changing the way people are working and shaping the future of work. It is the primary BRICS governments responsibility to offer ways to provide for matching skills and training programs for the needs of new business models and new forms of employment in the digital economy.
49. Disruptions in education systems from the pandemic may have long-term socio-economic impacts. We emphasize the crucial role the education should play in promoting sustainable development and inclusive economic growth of the post- COVID-19 world. BRICS should put more efforts into strengthening the resilience of education systems and enhancing cooperation in the best practices exchange on the high quality and steady accessible education provision based on digital technologies for distant and blended learning.
50. BRICS Network University in accordance with the adopted Concept of the BRICS Network University Operation and Development and The Road Map of the BRICS Network University for the short and medium term, BRICS University League and subsequent individual Universities' programs like that of the BRICS FEFU International University held in recognition of the Russia's BRICS Chairmanship 2020 should receive the all-round comprehensive support from the relevant authorities of the BRICS and be further promoted and scaled up for the benefit of the BRICS educational cooperation and BRICS youth involvement.

51. In order to continue the movement towards the higher role of the BRICS countries in the formation of international educational space and elevating their quality and influence in the global educational space, it is vital to ensure free flow of academic exchanges, introduce more types of scholarships, grants and programs for students, researchers and scholars assisted by the national authorities, businesses and universities.
52. More should be done on facilitation of the process of visa acquisition for the BRICS scholars and students in order to promote further academic exchange and enhance academic mobility. Also, a visa-free travel for experts (BRICS Travel card) initiative is reiterated.
53. BRICS countries should aim at having multilateral framework agreement to provide for recognition of diplomas and qualifications in all the BRICS countries in addition to separate bilateral agreements of the kind between some of the BRICS. The comprehensive solution should be found to facilitate short-term and long-term academic mobility programs.
54. Tourism, in all its manifestations (health, academic, environmental etc.) remains the backbone of BRICS countries' economic development. COVID-19 pandemic, bringing about lock-downs and border closures significantly downgraded people's ability to travel and discover new destinations. It is vital for the BRICS to enhance cooperation between relevant authorities, businesses and expert community on experience sharing, facilitate partnerships between tour operators and relevant government officials, consider new policies to unlock tourist potential by providing region-specific incentives to upgrade tourist and transport infrastructure, develop human capital and expert capacities while engaging into mutually beneficial partnerships with international partners. In addition, more direct flights should be introduced between the largest cities of BRICS.
55. BRICS should pay attention to people-centered sustainable and inclusive development. Women present the yet unexplored potential for the five countries' development. A number of initiatives, like the launch this year of the Women Business Alliance are aimed at bridging those opportunities' gap, but much more needs to be done for proper women empowerment in BRICS countries. To these ends, the idea of gender-disaggregated statistics while yet unrealized should be reconsidered by responsible BRICS authorities to evaluate existing deficiencies and offer sound scientifically-based pathway for next steps to be introduced within BRICS countries' political and socio-economic policy space. We also welcome the elaborated study on Women Economic Empowerment in the BRICS prepared by the BRICS Russia Expert

Council together with the National Committee on BRICS Research with the assistance from the National Coordinators from the BTTC and urge relevant BRICS authorities to consider this study as a reference point for the best practices exchange and introduction of relevant policies and enhanced cooperation to ensure the exploration of the full potential of women for our five States.

56. There is a need to increase cultural exchange between the BRICS countries to overcome barriers introduced by differences in mentality and understandings of one and the same issue. BRICS should promote pathways to transform from “I-thinking” to “we-thinking”.

Moscow, October 22-24, 2020

BTTC Working Group for Indicator System

Pillars	Sub-topics	Areas of cooperation and indicators
Politics and global governance	International security	<p>Joint efforts to combat terrorism, drugs, and other transnational crimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint initiatives and possible cooperation on the elaboration of common stance where appropriate within the international organizations on the topic • Joint exercises, initiatives of national organizations, exchange programs of relevant personnel • Regular meetings of BRICS countries' national authorities, responsible for the topics • Evidence of recommendations of the BRICS thematic WG
		<p>Regional security and international crisis management efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint statements of BRICS states on the necessity of peaceful resolution of conflicts • Collective actions taken within the international organizations and by the BRICS per se • Peacekeeping efforts (troops, police, and military observers in the mandate, other relevant data)
		<p>Joint initiatives on safeguarding peaceful outer space</p>
		<p>Promotion and protection of human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the BRICS Human Rights Report • National and international activities of the BRICS countries to uphold civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development on an equal footing • Cooperation in UN HRC and 3rd Committee of the UNGA
		<p>Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) transparency, accountability, and corruption in the public sector rating (WB Group)</p>
		<p>Risk assessment and control, risk early warning</p>
	Global governance	<p>Rule-making for the modernized global governance order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint initiatives and possible cooperation on the elaboration of common stance where appropriate on major international issues within global multilateral mechanisms such as the UN, WTO, G20, IMF and World Bank

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforms of the global governance institutions and mechanisms to safeguard the common interests of developing countries • Joint conferences on relevant issues, including with the participation of the other members of the international community when appropriate and consensual by the BRICS • Creation of new global rules and approaches for AI development and application, global governance of cyberspace and new technologies
		<p>BRICS Cooperation on cyberspace governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and possible cooperation on the elaboration of common stance where appropriate within multilateral mechanisms such as the UN, IGF, ITU, IETF, ICANN, ISO, IEEE etc.
		BRICS Information Service Cooperation Index
<p>Economic growth and cooperation, finance and sustainable developments</p>	<p>Dynamics and quality of economic growth, position in the world economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of BRICS PPP GDP in global GDP • Dynamics of per capita PPP GDP of BRICS countries • Share of BRICS in global exports and imports of goods and services • Share of BRICS in global FDI inflows and outflows • Global Competitiveness Index
	<p>Trade and investment</p>	<p>Conditions and dynamics of intra-BRICS Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute figures, dynamics and proportion of intra-BRICS goods and services imports/exports to total goods and services imports/exports • Absolute figures on the trade in services between BRICS countries (by Mode and by partner trading nation) • Absolute figures and dynamics of inter-BRICS trade in intermediate goods • Share of high-tech exports in intra-BRICS exports • Dynamics of BRICS countries average rate of applied MFN tariff • Interventions conducive to trade liberalization • Bilateral cases of antidumping within BRICS • Trade Complementarity Index • Trade Geographic Concentration Index • Service Trade Complementarity Index
		<p>Conditions and dynamics of intra-BRICS Investments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of intra-BRICS FDI inflows to total FDI inflows • List of intra-BRICS business investment treaties

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of intra-BRICS double taxation treaties • List of Third countries that signed bilateral investment treaties with BRICS • List of Third countries that signed double taxation treaties with BRICS • Ease of doing business index • Number of Economic And Trade Cooperation Zone
Financial cooperation	The proportion of intra-regional cross-border bond liabilities to total cross-border bond liabilities
	Pair-wise dispersion of deposit rates averaged regionally relative to that averaged globally
	BRICS Digital Financial Inclusion Index
	Infrastructure development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute figures and dynamics of intra-BRICS investments in infrastructure • The pipeline of infrastructure projects (number of projects) with BRICS investors participation • List of projects under PPP Mode
	The pipeline of infrastructure projects (number of projects) with private investors participation (either PPP or fully private)
	Joint initiatives on financial supervision and regulation, development of international standards of taxation and countering the erosion of tax base and profit shifting, tax transparency
	Joint initiatives at FATF and relevant regional bodies (FSRBs)
	Evaluation of the achievements of the New Development Bank
Science, technology and innovation	Joint initiatives within New BRICS STI Architecture (including WGs cooperation and Steering committee operation)
	Implementation of BRICS STI flagship initiatives
	Projects within BRICS STI Framework Programme
	Scientific publications made within BRICS STI Framework Programme
	Young scientists enrolled in projects within BRICS STI Framework Programme
	Patents and patent applications in projects within BRICS STI Framework Programme
	Visits to BRICS research infrastructure (incl. BRICS GRAIN Initiative)
	Large STI-related international events
	The proportion of the digital economy in economic output

Digital economy and innovation development	Joint activities within the Framework for BRICS E-commerce cooperation
	Cross border e-commerce and digital trade volume
	The proportion of cross border online retail quota
	Patent protection and patent utilization conversion efficiency
	Small and medium enterprises supported
	High tech enterprises listed by the stock exchange
	On-line services' platforms including e-Government services (e-Government Development Index – EGDI, Telecommunication Infrastructure Index – TII, Human Capital Index – HCI, Online Service Index – OSI)
	International Internet access rate, domestic Internet penetration rate
	Government and industry digitalization (digital transformation) level
	Labor productivity of industries above Designated Size
	5G base station, the efficiency of new infrastructure construction
	Collaboration between enterprises, universities and research institutes
	Technology transfer platform
	Smart Cities projects and International Smart City rates
	Industrialization of scientific and technological achievements efficiency
Joint research, mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures	
Agenda 2030 (SDGs)	<p>BRICS cooperation in achieving the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving of SDG targets (in accordance with the voluntary reports of BRICS members) • Assistance to other developing countries in achieving SDG targets • Joint projects of National Development Banks using the BRICS Interbank cooperation mechanism
Energy and environmental cooperation	<p>Global energy/environmental governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint initiatives on global energy and environmental governance mechanisms such as the UN, WTO, G20 • Joint initiative on energy security • Joint initiatives and actions on UN SGD -7 • Collective CO2 emissions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDB projects that have a positive environmental impact (improvement of energy efficiency, reduction of CO₂, nature preservation etc.)
		<p>Contribution of BRICS cooperation to the growth of energy investment and trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint projects on green technologies development and use Joint projects on clean energy utilization etc.
		<p>Achievements of the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform (ERCP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly funded research projects Industrial/commercial implementation ratio
Agriculture and food security cooperation		<p>Sustainability of agricultural sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRICS countries gross output value of agriculture BRICS countries major crops output
		<p>Feasibility of Agricultural Platform and progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intention of BRICS agriculture cooperation and agreements (including bilateral agreements) The intra-regional trade volume of agricultural products
		<p>Scientific complementarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural science and technology cooperation projects among BRICS countries Agricultural researchers' exchanges among BRICS countries Establishment of BRICS Agriculture Research Platform
Connectivity		<p>Connectivity of systems, policies, standards and rules in the fields of customs, Inspection and quarantine, transport logistics and e-commerce</p>
		<p>Connectivity by land, air, sea and networks</p>
		<p>Ratio between the averaged liner shipping connectivity index over regional trading partners and the averaged liner shipping connectivity index over all trading partners</p>
		<p>Logistics performance index: Overall</p>
Humanitarian cooperation and people-to-people contacts	Cultural exchanges	<p>Inter-governmental agreements</p>
		<p>Government funding and policy support</p>
		<p>Translation of literary works in five countries' languages and level of penetration</p>
		<p>Festivals and fairs and level of citizens' interest</p>
	Tourism	<p>Intra-BRICS tourist flow, dynamics and proportion to total flows</p>

Educational cooperation	Inter-governmental agreements, including recognition of degrees and academic qualifications
	Government funding and policy support, grant volume and scientists contests
	Achievements of the BRICS Network University and University League
	Intra-BRICS inbound/outbound exchange students, enrollment into higher education programs and courses
	Joint (bilateral and pentalateral) educational programs, research projects
	Language and cultural centers within BRICS
Sports exchanges	BRICS sports events
	Institutional exchanges between relevant BRICS governmental bodies or associations of sports
	Joint training of professional coaches and athletes
	Jointly launch national fitness activities
Media interactions	Media communication platforms
	Established media organizations in other BRICS countries
	The degree of public awareness of BRICS media coverage
BRICS regional and municipal cooperation	Agreements between local governments
	Sister cities and related activities
	Effectiveness of the cooperation platform of civil society organizations
	Joint projects and information exchange of the smart cities development
Think tank cooperation	Activities carried out by BRICS think tanks
	Reports published by BRICS think tanks
	Policy proposals from BRICS think tanks
	Achievements of communication between BRICS think tanks and other platforms and fields
Healthcare cooperation	Agreements between the healthcare departments
	Creation and activities of the Vaccine Research Centre
	Performance of BRICS cooperation on major infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, COVID19 etc.
	Performance of BRICS cooperation on non-infectious chronic diseases (NCD)
	Performance of collaboration in cross-regional referral tracking of infectious diseases
	Outcomes of health data sharing among BRICS
	Joint educational and research projects in the medical field among BRICS countries