

BRIC's Joint Statement on Global Food Security

June 17, 2009

The fluctuations of global food prices coupled with the global financial crisis are threatening global food security. As a result, the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition grows and the progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals may be reversed. This challenge should be addressed without delay in a comprehensive manner through resolute action by all governments and the relevant international agencies.

The developed and developing countries should address the food security issue according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The developed countries should provide financial and technology support for developing countries in the field of food production capacity. The BRIC countries welcome various initiatives in this field by the UN and its special agencies. The BRIC countries renew their commitment to contribute to the efforts to overcome the global food crisis.

Countering effectively the global food crisis is impossible without a clear and full understanding of its causes. Attempts to explain food price hikes by an increase in consumption in developing countries obscure the true causes which have a complex and multifaceted nature.

Global climate change and natural disasters have direct implications on food security through changes in agro-ecological conditions. Current global economic and financial crisis also has negative impact on food security through shrinking financial resources available to agriculture sector. Restricted market access and trade-distorting subsidies in developed countries have also hampered the development of food production capacity in developing countries over the last thirty years. Further, global market conditions have not created adequate incentives for the expansion of agricultural production in developing and least developed countries that have become main importers of food products.

It is also important to assess the challenges and opportunities posed by the biofuels production and use in view not only of the world's food security, but also of the energy security and sustainable development needs. An international cooperation mechanism needs to be established to review and reevaluate the long-term implications of the development of biomass energy, and develop relevant policy guidance accordingly.

The BRIC countries welcome, therefore, the exchange of experiences in biofuels technologies, norms and regulations, in order to ensure that production and use of biofuels is sustainable, in accordance with the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – and that it takes into account the need to achieve and maintain global food security. Sustainable biofuels can constitute a driving force for social inclusion and income distribution mainly in the impoverished rural areas of developing and least developed countries, where most of the world's famine problems are located.

Tackling effectively the food crisis requires a fully coordinated international response and should include both short-term and long-term measures. The international community needs to work out and consistently implement a comprehensive strategy to resolve this global problem. In this respect, the BRIC countries welcome the outcomes of relevant international fora, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome.

The BRIC countries also welcome the results of the World Grain Forum which was held in Saint Petersburg and call on all interested states and international organisations to take necessary steps to implement the measures agreed upon at the Forum.

Ensuring food security requires a well-functioning world market and trade system for food and agriculture based on the principles of fairness and non-discrimination. In this regard, it is of paramount importance to accelerate the Doha round of talks at the World Trade Organization

(WTO) in order to find compromise solutions for radical reductions of multibillion subsidies in the agricultural sector, which distort terms of trade and prevent developing countries from increasing their agricultural production. We are committed to opposing protectionism, establishing a just and reasonable international trade regime for agricultural products, and giving farmers from developing countries incentives to engage in agricultural production.

The BRIC countries support the adoption of a wide range of mid- to long-term measures in order to provide for a solution to the issue of food security. Such measures may include:

- a) rendering additional resources and assistance to the agricultural sector through the channels of respective national budgets and international development institutions, mainly to household agriculture, which is the main source for food production;
- b) joint technological innovations and international cooperation to introduce advanced technologies in the agricultural sector of developing countries to significantly increase agricultural productivity. Intellectual property rights in the agricultural domain should strike a balance between the common good of humankind and incentives to innovation;
- c) upgrading agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation, transportation, supply, storage and distribution systems and promoting technical assistance, access to credit and crop insurance policies. In this context public-private partnerships could play a significant role;
- d) improving the exchange of knowledge and commercialisation of sustainable biofuels;
- e) ensuring wider food access at the national and international levels through appropriate policies and well functioning distribution systems especially for the poor and most vulnerable people in developing countries;
- f) sharing the best practices of operating successful public distribution programmes; and
- g) equipping developing countries with financial and technological means to fully implement adaptation measures to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change on food security.

Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/61>