

**JOINT DECLARATION OF THE 8TH MEETING OF BRICS MINISTERS OF
AGRICULTURE AND AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT**

Skukuza, South Africa,

22 June 2018

1. We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa, met in Skukuza, Mpumalanga Province South Africa, for the **8th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development on 22nd June 2018 held under the theme "Promoting Climate Smart Approaches and Actions to Enhance Resilience of Agriculture and Food Production Systems"** and discussed issues of common interests on BRICS agricultural development and pointed the way forward for our agricultural cooperation.

2. BRICS countries cover a total land area of approximately 39 million square kilometers, which is 27% of the world's total land surface. By 2017, the combined nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the BRICS countries was US\$18.273 trillion. BRICS will accelerate its role as a major driving force for world economic development. The combined population of BRICS countries was estimated at 3.065 billion during 2017 and this is approximately 41% of the world population. The United Nations (UN) estimates that world population will grow from the current 7.5 billion to nearly 9.8 billion by 2050 and the BRICS countries are expected to make a significant contribution towards this growth. BRICS countries are expected to increase food accessibility to meet the growing demand of the population.

3. We are cognisant of progress made towards the achievements of the BRICS agricultural cooperative mechanism which was initiated by the First Meeting of BRIC Ministers of Agriculture held by Russia in 2010.

4. We acknowledge the need to fastrack progress of BRICS Agricultural Ministers proposals in line with the Xiamen Declaration of the 9th BRICS Summit. Noting that this is the second year of BRICS action plan “2017 – 2020”, initiatives inclusive of bilateral agreements were concluded as well as the BRICS seminars to share experiences on agricultural resilience and adaptation to natural disasters. We therefore reconfirm our commitment to further strengthen the agricultural cooperation among members. Areas of collaboration include productivity and profitability through strengthening of sustainable agricultural practices, producers support, enhancement of trade balance, leverage on public research, innovation and technology development including value addition and sharing best practices on climate resilience especially for smallholder farmers and adaptive approaches amongst BRICS countries.
5. We support the global fight against hunger and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development with the emphasis on its Sustainable Development Goal 2. We take efforts to achieve food security and nutrition and promote advanced development of agriculture and adaptation to climate change.
6. We acknowledge the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach towards sustainable development goals, especially those closely related to agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

7. We are concerned about the rising food prices, farmers’ income drop and agriculture input costs which have a negative impact to the local and global economies. We underline that making markets function better can contribute to reducing food price volatility and enhance food security. It is critical to continuously improve support of on and off farm infrastructure, as well as support

to producers in the form of advisory services, access to markets, creating efficiency of markets, food safety quality certification programmes as well as technology development and transfer, reducing food loss and waste. We commit to quality certifications to the appropriate farmer categories which should be primarily based on official standards and implemented in a manner that does not increase the farmers' costs.

8. Efforts to entrench the right to food into legislation are of priority for all Member States, as we note increased food insecurity in developing and poor countries. We acknowledge the need for better baseline information on the state of food insecurity for all Member States in order to strengthen actions to reduce food insecurity. We appreciate Brazil's "Zero Hunger Program", Russia's Russian "Federation Food Security Doctrine", India's "National Food Security Mission", China's "Targeted Poverty Alleviation" and South Africa's "Fetsa Tlala Food Production Initiative".
9. We fully support the global fight against hunger, encourage members to endorse at the highest level of policy framework and call on the international community to scale up assistance and support the United Nations bodies such as the FAO, IFAD and WFP to achieve initiatives in the Action Plan 2017-2020.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE TO ITS ADVERSE

IMPACTS

10. We recognize that climate change has imposed threats on global food security, sustainable development and poverty eradication. We prioritise and support climate smart approaches with sustainable agricultural intensification to guide farming activities. We will further build and improve the adaptability of agriculture to climate change and support bio-economy. We intend to continuously increase agricultural production, farming income and promote best practices to better control the impact of climate change and related meteorological hazards. We

recognize the particular vulnerability of agriculture to the adverse effects of climate change and the potential impacts to food security.

11. We recognize the importance of climate change adaptation towards sustainable agriculture. We will take efforts to develop, share, promote and transfer environment-friendly climate smart and sustainable agricultural intensification technologies, like integration of crops, livestock and forestry systems for developing countries to enhance resilience of agriculture and food production systems. We unequivocally emphasize the need to align practices of agricultural sustainability by encouraging farmers at various levels towards conserving, protecting and preserving natural resources. We appreciate the consensus reached at the 2017 G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting on sustainable use of water as a natural resource. We encourage farmers to protect water resources and biodiversity through improved integrated production systems. Promoting cooperation and information exchange on climate change will be prioritised to increase the perception among farmers and policy makers regarding the benefits of fostering resilient agronomical practices that reduce risk associated to the adverse impacts of climate change as well as other relevant meteorological hazards.
12. We will, through exchange programmes, jointly implement education, capacity building and communication activities regarding mitigation adaptation and early warning systems. We acknowledge the importance of stronger surveillance and early warning systems to ensure rapid response in counteracting both natural and man-made disasters including introduction of new pests and diseases. We also encourage efforts to disseminate the use of metadata analysis and other analytic tools as strategic elements to support decision making and the implementation of national adaptation plans.
13. We acknowledge efforts by global communities to develop their national plans and domestic actions to implement the Paris Agreement (PA) through their Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDCs).

We welcome the outcomes of the Twenty-Third Conference of Parties (COP23) on agriculture under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We believe the decision reached by Parties on Agriculture called “Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture” will assist developing countries to improve their agronomical practices, enhance adaptation and resilience of agricultural systems. We appreciate Brazil’s “ABC Program” and India’s “Soil Health Card Scheme” as examples of national policy aiming to preserve the economic value, increase resilience and adaptive capacity as well as better control emission from agriculture.

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

14. We reaffirm and support the establishment of the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform (ARP) initiated by India in 2016. We appreciate the fundamental importance of research, development and innovation in global sustainability and competitiveness. We endeavor to strengthen the agricultural research collaborative networks among the BRICS countries to enhance the resilience of the collective agricultural and food systems in the face of the changing climate. We recognise the need for follow-up steps in implementing the aims and objectives of the ARP.

STRENGTHENING, SHARING AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION FOR BETTER ICT APPLICATION IN BRICS AGRICULTURE

15. We need to increase the effective results of the current information sharing and exchange programmes and systems as well the exchange mechanisms on agricultural information such as the Basic Agricultural Information Exchange System (BAIES).

16. We will share achievements of technology innovation, strengthen exchanges and mutual learning of innovations on smart agriculture, in areas such as biotechnology and nanotechnology. We underline the importance of better application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in agriculture.

TRADE AND AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT

17. We commit to the reform process in agriculture at the multilateral level, in order to realize our long standing country specific priorities including promotion of fair trade aimed at substantially reducing trade-distorting domestic practices.

18. We intend to enhance the rules-based multilateral trading system by supporting the World Trade Organisation (WTO), upholding scientific principles, reinforcing the work of the international standard-setting organizations and their subsidiary bodies (Codex Alimentarius, OIE and IPPC) related to sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures as well as Technical Barriers to Trade.

19. We will promote targeted investment in ensuring the unlocking of BRICS countries' latent agricultural potential stimulating the commerce of agricultural goods among our countries. We are committed to expanding and facilitating trade including value added products. We also welcome suggestions from the business fora to governments in order to enhance trade and improve the investment opportunities among BRICS countries.

20. We commit to pursue further dialogue with a view to reform the Agreement on Agriculture towards open, fair and non-discriminatory, market-oriented agricultural trading systems.

21. We encourage international financial institutions, including the New Development Bank (NDB) to leverage resources and sharing best practices in international development finance, and to contribute to the global agricultural market and the growth of developing countries and emerging markets.

22. We encourage the BRICS New Development Bank to finance sustainable development projects that can promote growth in agriculture, aquaculture, agro-livestock-forestry integrated system, irrigation infrastructure and other value added activities.
23. We acknowledge the achievements of South-South Cooperation, and will continue to enhance agricultural cooperation among BRICS Countries. We also note the progress of Africa's Agenda 2063 in facilitating rapid growth across sectors in Africa, especially in promoting economic diversification, expediting agricultural transformation, upgrading agro-processing capacity, and achieving self-sufficiency and increasing food security.
24. We recognize the importance of reinforcing BRICS agricultural Ministers' coordination and collaboration under multilateral mechanisms. We will continue to strengthen communication and coordination within major international institutions and cooperative platforms and fora including the G20, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the WTO.
25. We will endeavor to ensure the full implementation of the Action Plan 2017-2020 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS Countries.
26. We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of South Africa for organizing and hosting the 8th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture, BRICS seminar on climate smart approaches and we pledge our support and encouragement to the Federative Republic of Brazil, which will be hosting the next meeting in 2019.