

The Ninth Meeting of the BRICS Trade Ministers

Brasília, 11 November 2019

Joint Communiqué

1. The Ninth Meeting of the BRICS Trade Ministers was held on 11 November 2019, in Brasilia. The meeting allowed for open and constructive discussions about opportunities for enhanced intra-BRICS trade and investment cooperation, as well as exchanges on the current global economic and trade environment. The meeting took place in preparation for the Eleventh BRICS Summit, convened under the theme “BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future”.

International economy and BRICS trade and investment cooperation

2. We note the increase, since our last meeting, in uncertainties and the loss of momentum in the world economy, which affect the global trade outlook. In this context, we recognize the important role of BRICS as a platform for cooperation that can enhance trade and investment opportunities.
3. We agree that trade liberalization is a key element to unlock the potential for economic growth and sustainable development. We stressed the need for an international trade environment that is transparent, rules-based and open.
4. We are pleased that intra-BRICS economic cooperation has been steadily growing over the years and note with satisfaction the work done by our technical teams to increase collaboration in the areas of trade, investment, e-commerce, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), technical regulations and intellectual property rights.

Multilateral Trading System and the World Trade Organization (WTO)

5. We confirm our commitment to transparent, non-discriminatory, open, free and inclusive international trade. We reiterate our full support to the rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core. It is critical that all WTO members avoid unilateral and protectionist measures which run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO.
6. We recognize the importance of necessary WTO reform, including in the lead up to the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference, to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the Organization and its capacity to better address current and future challenges. Our countries will work with all WTO Members to advance a process for necessary reform that is balanced, open, transparent and that promotes inclusivity and development. The reform must, inter alia, preserve the centrality, core values and fundamental principles

of the WTO, and consider the interests of all members, including developing countries and LDCs

7. The WTO dispute settlement mechanism, including its Appellate Body, is a cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. Its work is essential for the proper and effective functioning of the Organization. We remain committed to the preservation of a functioning two-stage binding adjudication system for disputes in the WTO. We urge all WTO Members to engage constructively, as a matter of priority, in the effort to ensure the continuation of a fully operational Appellate Body.

Trade and Investment Promotion

8. We welcome the continued efforts to foster closer economic collaboration on trade and investment opportunities between BRICS countries. In this regard, we commend the Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) for concluding the review of the BRICS Joint Trade Study and we take full note of the national presentations on the Study shared in the CGETI meetings throughout this year. The review of the Joint Study will make a significant contribution to fostering greater mutual knowledge, economic cooperation as well as trade and investment opportunities among our countries.
9. We also congratulate the CGETI for the conclusion of negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding on Trade and Investment Promotion between BRICS countries. The Memorandum will help enhance economic opportunities among BRICS countries and allow for sharing policy expertise.

E-Commerce

10. We appreciate the results of the third meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Electronic Commerce and acknowledge the increasing importance of the subject in terms of public policy and cooperation.
11. We underscore the importance of sharing our national experiences, including, as appropriate, in the elaboration and implementation of legal frameworks, related to e-commerce. Differences in terms of legal frameworks should not prevent, but rather stimulate, the exchange of information on our strategies and best practices.
12. We highlight the importance of the exchange of information, as appropriate, on methodologies regarding the collection and analysis of data related to e-commerce. The Working Group on this subject offers a useful space for presentations and updates, as appropriate, on each country's approaches towards the measurement of electronic commerce.

Investment Facilitation

13. We acknowledge the benefits resulting from the focused discussion undertaken by CGETI on improving business environments to attract foreign direct investment.
14. We underline the importance of both investment promotion and support for investors as key elements of investment facilitation. We should continue discussions on different approaches to attraction and retention of foreign direct investment.
15. We agree that the sharing of knowledge and experience among BRICS members can help us in our strive towards the realization of a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable investment environment, as well as improve governance.

Cooperation on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

16. We recognize the crucial role that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises continue to play for economic growth and employment and reaffirm that continued collaboration between BRICS countries on MSMEs is a relevant tool for policy makers.
17. We recall the mandate established at the Eighth Meeting of the BRICS Trade Ministers, and appreciate the organization of the first CGETI session dedicated to MSMEs, where BRICS countries were able to share their views and experiences and to benefit from mutual learning.
18. We direct the CGETI to continue its work on MSMEs under the successful format of dedicated sessions, addressing the other topics described in the BRICS MSMEs Cooperation Framework.
19. We also welcome the results of the 4th BRICS MSMEs Roundtable Meeting, which has proved to be a successful format to promote in-depth discussion of the challenges faced by MSMEs, in particular access to finance, formalization and their integration in international trade and global value chains.

Cooperation on Technical Regulations, Standards, Metrology and Conformity Assessment Procedures

20. We reaffirm the importance of cooperation among BRICS countries under the Working Mechanism on technical regulations, standards, metrology, conformity assessment, and accreditation adopted in 2018. We acknowledge the results of the dedicated sessions organized on these topics, which enhanced mutual knowledge and understanding of our respective systems, in particular in the fields of metrology and accreditation.

Cooperation in Intellectual Property Rights

21. We commend the CGETI and the Intellectual Property Rights Cooperation Mechanism (IPRCM) for convening the Workshop for Exchanges on Designing and Calibrating Intellectual Property Policies, which helped improve the transparency and understanding of intellectual property systems and policies. We draw attention to the Workshop Report, which addressed various topics of the BRICS IPRCM Action Plan with respect to national IP policies, such as dissemination of innovative technology, protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore, expert dialogue on intellectual property legal developments, issues related to public health and innovation policies.
22. We endorse the ongoing development of the BRICS network of intellectual property policy-makers. The IPRCM creates genuine opportunities for the exchange of ideas among the BRICS countries, which benefit from the diversity of policies used to stimulate and promote innovation.
23. We underscore the long-standing ongoing cooperation between the CGETI and the BRICS Heads of Intellectual Property Offices (HIPO), which ensures that the IPRCM work is in coordination with HIPO. We recognize the autonomy that each enjoys and the benefits generated by this method of work, which enriches both HIPO and the IPRCM. We commend the contribution of HIPO to the cooperation among the BRICS countries through mutual support and avoiding duplication of work with the IPRCM.
24. We note the importance of the groundwork that has progressed over the recent years to streamline the work of the IPRCM. The Implementation Framework, the Cooperation Guidelines and the Action Plan define a range of activities and goals that each successive CGETI Chairship may pursue.