

Joint Statement for the 5th BRICS Ministers of Environment Meeting

“Contribution of urban environmental management to improving the quality of life in cities”

São Paulo, Brazil, 15 August 2019

We, the Ministers of the Environment 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 held the fifth BRICS Ministers of Environment Meeting in São Paulo, on 15 August 2019.

We welcome the theme of the 5th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting, “Contribution of urban environmental management to improving the quality of life in cities”, which we acknowledge as an important issue for the development of the BRICS countries.

We recognize the importance of the implementation of the MoU on Environmental Cooperation between the BRICS member States, which was signed at the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in July 2018. In this year’s Meeting, we assessed the progress made thus far and decided to establish and strengthen concrete mechanisms of implementation of the cooperation initiatives agreed upon in previous meetings

We acknowledge with appreciation the Zero-draft of an Implementation Plan under the MOU which was kindly circulated by the Delegation of South Africa, and will rely on inter-sessional communication or through the Joint Working Group on Environment Meetings to determine the modalities of cooperation according to Paragraph 3 of the MOU. Special focus will be put on action-oriented cooperation with initial activities starting with small but well-defined scope and short-term deliverables.

We expect these initiatives to contribute towards the improvement of the quality of life in our cities, through the sharing of knowledge and experience on important issues such as waste management, cogeneration, reverse logistics, sanitation and water quality, urban air quality and urban green areas, and believe that the Partnership on Urban Environmental Sustainability Initiative (PUESI) could provide a supportive platform for associated exchange and cooperation, engaging partners including governmental agencies, local governments, research institutes, private sectors, and international organizations, etc.

We have advanced our dialogue on key themes that can be integrated into our cooperation initiatives, with emphasis on urban environmental management, contaminated areas and soil remediation, water quality, circular economy in the context of sustainable consumption and production, marine protected areas and combating marine litter, as well as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

We acknowledge individual efforts undertaken by each BRICS country in addressing these environmental problems and the innovative solutions presented for improving urban environmental quality.

We welcome the work developed by the BRICS Environment Working Group for the progress of the cooperation established in the BRICS Environmentally Sound Technology (BEST) Cooperation Platform and its programs. We believe that our individual achievements will be successfully shared through joint projects and programs, with the participation of the private sector and financial institutions. Experiences, such as reverse logistics, have a great potential to be replicated.

We are committed to reducing marine litter. For this purpose, we will endeavor to find solutions to reduce land-based impacts that affect marine ecosystems, through enhancing urban environment quality and protecting ecosystems and biodiversity. The Environment Working Group works as an important channel to share individual experiences in this matter.

We understand that the main sources of marine litter are from land-based activities and reach the oceans through rivers. In this case, we welcome the proposal of the Russian Federation on the new dimension of the Clean River of BRICS program on combining our efforts on combating marine litter. We agree to exchange our experience and best practices as well as the lessons learned on the upcoming BEST Platform meeting in Russia in 2020.

With respect to biodiversity, we are committed to contributing and supporting the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and to the successful outcome of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, in 2020. We have agreed to prioritize biodiversity conservation and develop a biodiversity cooperation mechanism. Efforts shall

be made to best coordinate positions concerning biodiversity among BRICS countries. We expect that the CBD's three objectives are considered in the framework in a balanced way, not allowing the overlooking of the oft-disregarded sustainable use of biological diversity components and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) pillars.

We express our appreciation for the Indian Presidency of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and reaffirm our commitment to combatting desertification, mitigating the effects of drought and restoring degraded land and soil.

We acknowledge the importance of global action against climate change. We are committed to work together and support the Chilean Presidency of the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Santiago. Our countries are committed to the successful implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement and urge that negotiations be transparent and result in outcomes that are fair and effective in addressing the challenge of climate change, while reflecting the principles of the Convention, especially the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), in the light of different national circumstances.

We also urge developed countries to fulfill their commitment under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement to provide means of implementation to developing countries including climate finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building support.

We express our appreciation for the participation of NDB officials in the Environment Working Group Meeting and the Ministers of Environment Meeting and we welcome the opportunity for the development of projects that aim at the protection of the environment. We recognize the efforts of the NDB in supporting environmental projects and further propose to consider the creation of a special NDB grant fund to support BRICS environmental cooperation.

We reaffirm the importance of jointly exploring new sources of financing individual, bilateral and multilateral projects. We believe that access to financial resources is key to tackling environmental problems in the developing world.

The countries acknowledged the Brazilian proposal to structure the environmental quality urban agenda according to the following themes: a) clean rivers and seas; b) waste management, resource efficiency and recovery of contaminated areas; c) sanitation; d) air quality; e) urban green areas, and agreed that initiatives in these themes should be incorporated in the BEST Platform.

The countries further noted the Brazilian willingness to initiate concrete actions on waste management, resource efficiency and recovery of contaminated areas and to explore how partnering among BRICS members can be instrumental in pursuing tangible results and we discussed the possibility of applying to the NDB for grants to support environmental initiatives.

The Ministers also agreed to issue a separate decision, to be attached to this Joint Statement, to show their commitment with delivering short-term cooperation on important subjects.

We express our gratitude to the Government of Brazil for hosting the 4th Environment Working Group Meeting (12 – 13 August 2018), in Brasília, and the 5th Ministers of Environment Meeting (15 August 2019), in São Paulo.

We thank the Russian Federation for the generous offer to host next year's Ministerial and Working Group meetings in Saint Petersburg.

5th BRICS Ministers of Environment Meeting

Ministerial Decision on Cooperation

São Paulo, Brazil, 15 August 2019

At the occasion of the 5th BRICS Ministers of Environment Meeting, held in São Paulo, Brazil, on 15 August 2019, the Ministers have discussed the importance of addressing the environmental challenges faced by urban populations in the BRICS countries. In this regard, they have decided to put in practice cooperation among the five countries as follows:

1. For the implementation of the Best Available Technologies (BAT) in the BRICS countries the Parties decided to work on the compilation of the BRICS BAT reference guide which could be made available for all Participants. This compendium may be published in the format of a Reference Book(s).
2. To fulfill this mandate, within a 3-month period, an expert group will be created consisting of representatives from each country, and a working plan of action shall be prepared for adoption in the next Ministerial Meeting in Russia in 2020.
3. To initiate cooperation projects for the development of urban environment programs leading to concrete results by 2020, and to seek support from the New Development Bank (NDB) and multilateral financing organizations to provide a long-term strategy to address those important needs.