



Sixth BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Ministerial Meeting

Durban Declaration

Theme: Leveraging BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation to Enhance Inclusive Growth and Development

Durban, South Africa, 3 July 2018

1. In preparation for the 10th BRICS Summit in South Africa, and in line with the proposed Johannesburg Declaration and Action Plan to be adopted on 25-27 July 2018 in Johannesburg, South Africa, we the BRICS Ministers for Science, Technology and Innovation met in Durban, South Africa on 3 July 2018, for the 6th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting.

2. Noting the proposed theme of the 10th BRICS Summit “*BRICS in Africa: Cooperation for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution*”, we re-emphasise the importance of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership which underscores the fundamental role of science, technology and innovation as key socio-economic change agents for global and regional progress, growth and stability.

3. We welcome the proposal to establish a BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre, that creates synergies between the BRICS STI and BRICS Health sectoral tracts

and agree to investigate the possibility of contributing to its establishment from a science, technology and innovation perspective.

4. We welcome the establishment of the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) with thrusts on innovation. We will explore mobilising STI resources in support of this initiative.

5. Underlining the theme of the 6th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting “***Leveraging BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation to Enhance Inclusive Growth and Development***”, we reaffirm our vision to promote science, technology and innovation for human development utilising people-centred and public-good driven policy and implementation frameworks.

6. Based on the BRICS STI Work Plan 2015-2018, we recognise the progress of STI cooperation since 2015 and in particular the bold efforts of the member countries under the present 2017-2018 BRICS STI Action Plan.

7. We welcome the hosting the 4th BRICS STI Funding Working Group Meeting in South Africa on 30 June 2018 and welcome the outcomes of the 2nd Call of the BRICS STI Framework Programme and related funding principles, which reaffirms the strategic value of this instrument as a mechanism for promoting BRICS research and technology development. We look forward to launch the 3rd Call for proposals of the BRICS STI Framework Programme in the fourth quarter of 2018 in the following thematic areas: prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; water resources and pollution treatment; geospatial technology and its applications; new and renewable energy, and energy efficiency, including solid state lighting; astronomy; biotechnology and biomedicine including human health and neuroscience; information technologies and high performance computing; ocean and polar science and technology; material science, including nanotechnology; photonics; research infrastructures, including mega-science projects; Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership (STIEP); and aeronautics, with the Russian Federation continuing as the Call Secretariat. We restate the support of our Ministries and Funding Agencies to continue joint funding of the BRICS STI Framework Programme.

8. We welcome the successful convening of the 3rd BRICS Young Scientist Forum (YSF) in Durban, South Africa which included a number of new elements such as the *BRICS Young Women in Science Dialogue*, the *BRICS Young Innovator Prize*, the *BRICS Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Workshop*, and the *BRICS Seminar on Science Diplomacy, Advice and Communication*. We strongly recommend that these activities should become permanent features of the BRICS Young Scientist Forum going forward. We support the proposal to establish the BRICS YSF coordinating committee and thank India for agreeing to coordinate and provide a leadership role in this regard. We thank Brazil for offering to host the 4th BRICS Young Scientist Forum in the lead up to the 7th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting in Brazil in 2019.

9. We welcome the successful convening of the 2nd Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Research Infrastructures (RI) in Campinas, Brazil in March 2018 and support the main outcomes of this meeting, in particular, the establishment of a web portal to facilitate cooperation between the BRICS countries in the domain RI and mega-science projects. We view this as an important first step: towards streamlining and strengthening cooperation; to forge closer cooperation on existing major and mega-science projects in the BRICS member states; and to plan the possible establishment of future BRICS RI. We thank the Russian Federation for initiating the work on the web portal and agreeing to lead further discussions on the modalities to establish a coordinating mechanism for BRICS RI.

10. We welcome Russia hosting the 1st BRICS Meeting on Foresight and S&T Priority Setting and the 1st Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Biotechnology and Biomedicine, including Human Health and Neuroscience (WG Biomed) in November 2017, which approved its Terms of Reference and discussed two main areas for cooperation: Antimicrobial Resistance and Cognitive Disorders. We welcome the hosting of the 1st Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Nanotechnology and Material Science in October 2017, and note for further discussion the proposal to establish the BRICS Charter of the Network Centre for Material Sciences and Nanotechnologies. We further welcome Russia hosting the 1st Meeting of the Working Group on Photonics in March 2018 and the initiative to create a BRICS Virtual Institute of Photonics (VIP).

11. We welcome the hosting of the third BRICS Astronomy Working Group meeting in Pune, India in September 2017. We also welcome the hosting of the 2nd Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Information and Communication Technology and High Performance Computing in May 2018 in India, and support the need for a dedicated Call for Proposals on flagship BRICS R&D projects in disruptive technologies that strategically positions the BRICS partners for leadership in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We welcome the proposal of the Working group to establish a BRICS Virtual Centre on ICT and HPC. We further welcome the establishment of An Integrated Hub for BRICS Innovation Collaboration on ICT and HPC and thank China, South Africa and India for agreeing to assume a coordinating role in this process.

12. Pursuant to the BRICS Action Plan for Innovation Cooperation adopted in Hangzhou, China in July 2017, we welcome Brazil's proposal to establish the BRICS networks of science parks, technology business incubators and SMEs, and China's proposal to establish a BRICS Technology Transfer Center under the direction of the BRICS Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership (STIEP) Working Group. We take note of China's proposal in consultation with India to host the 2nd Meeting of the STIEP Working Group, in mid-September of 2018 to give further impetus to this strategic area of cooperation.

13. Recognising the need to establish inter-BRICS investment instruments for STI, we endorse the initiative to explore possible avenues of assistance for BRICS STI cooperation on innovation and entrepreneurship from the New Development Bank (NDB) and other development financing platforms and support the proposal to establish a task team to pursue comprehensive discussions with these organisations. We thank South Africa for agreeing to coordinate this engagement.

14. Cognisant of the achievements of BRICS STI since the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation in March 2015, we note however, that the organization of these activities, which increases in scope and complexity with each passing year, remains ad-hoc in nature. In this regard, we endorse the initiative to investigate the feasibility of establishing a permanent mechanism to manage and coordinate BRICS STI activities and thank South Africa and Russia for offering to lead this process.

15. We endorse the BRICS STI Action Plan 2018-2019 and task our officials under the leadership of Brazil to start in earnest the drafting of the new BRICS Work Plan 2019-2022 in order for it to be ready for adoption at the 7th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting in Brazil in 2019.

16. Brazil, Russia, India and China extend their warm appreciation to the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa for hosting the 6th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting and the 8th BRICS STI Senior Officials Meeting.

17. Russia, India, China and South Africa convey their appreciation to Brazil for its offer to host the 7th BRICS STI Ministerial Meeting and the 9th BRICS STI Senior Officials Meeting in 2019 and extend their full support to that end.

Done at Durban, South Africa on 3 July 2018

Federative Republic of Brazil

Russian Federation

Republic of India

People's Republic of China

Republic of South Africa