

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 7TH BRICS ACADEMIC FORUM TO THE LEADERS

BRICS: COOPERATION FOR GROWTH, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY

Delegates from five BRICS countries and over 200 international experts gathered in Moscow for the 7th BRICS Academic Forum in May 2015 and worked out the following conclusions and recommendations:

BRICS and the outside world

1. Over the period since the previous Academic forum a shift of power from advanced economies to the emerging countries and thus a need for wider involvement of the developing countries in the global governance mechanism have become more pronounced. BRICS has risen its profile as the most vivid manifestation of that shift, being a unique mechanism based on the mutual respect and sovereign equality of its members. BRICS countries could be seen as civilizational and cultural lynchpins in their respective regions.

2. While there are considerable differences in our countries and current transformations of the international system add to those divergences, the five countries continue cooperation in the spirit of transparency, friendship and mutual respect. The BRICS do not seek to undermine the current global governance systems, but rather wish to reform it so that benefits of globalization accrue for the common good.

Building a fair world order

3. The five countries share values, based on the principles of sovereignty, cultural diversity, plurality and strengthening international law against unilateral actions. They stress the need to preserve the central role of the United Nations in world affairs, while recognizing the need for reforming of the UN Security Council.
4. BRICS is an instrument of the global historic justice, representing a new model of global relations, based on collective leadership.
5. BRICS cooperation is also a manifestation of the democratic world order arrangements, based on the commonality of interests and aspiration towards convergence of approaches in the search of consensus.
6. While it is true that BRICS started their cooperation with the financial and economic issues, where the most visible achievements are the creation of the New Development Bank and Current Reserve Arrangement (awaiting also adoption of the BRICS Economic Strategy), there's gradual transformation of the forum into a cooperation mechanism in all areas of mutual concern, which would allow to collectively address new developments and contemporary challenges.
7. BRICS acknowledges that the modern world demonstrates unequal opportunities and rights to an independent opinion. BRICS countries in the spirit of inclusivity should promote and support multiple narratives and ideas from across the spectrum of the global community and should oppose dominance of a single vision and approach.
8. BRICS countries should play a more active role on the global arena, take up higher responsibility and assume the proportionate burden in maintenance of the new world order. This of course would necessitate reforming global economic and political institutions.

BRICS Evolution and Institutionalization Vision

9. Overbureaucratization may affect the flexibility and creativity of BRICS, nevertheless there is general consensus that intra-BRICS consultative mechanisms should be diversified and developed.

10. It is highly recommended that the BRICS governments follow through with their decision to have fully functional Virtual Secretariat operational by 2016.

11. Also at this moment, there is a need for deepening and expanding areas of cooperation between BRICS countries. This would be more valuable as opposed to broadening of the membership of the group. Nevertheless, it is considered to be of utmost importance to establish sustainable outreach links with other countries and regional groupings and even beyond in order to propagate the BRICS objectives and ideas.

New Drivers for BRICS Economic Cooperation and Trade

12. BRICS need to consolidate strategy and build up mutual trust along with increasing degree of complementarity among the five countries. They need to find new mechanisms to address each members' concern, both regionally and globally.

13. Many emerging economies have worked out their own ambitious strategies of economic and technological development. Most of the time such programs require substantial governmental assistance and support. In order to meet the requirements of the current situation BRICS countries could launch within the WTO discussion on the legitimacy and possibility of support of national procedures in the situation when a country officially starts national programs of specific sector development.

14. BRICS should consider prospects of intra-industry trade specialization within the five countries, coordination of the industrial policies of member states, trade and industrial policy implications of Global Value Chains and trade facilitation agenda, as well as other new trade issues.

15. It is crucially important to participate in international (global, regional, interregional) value chains and create conditions for development in BRICS countries.

16. Energy, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing are the key areas to expand intra-BRICS cooperation. Other areas like digital economy and services are also important with regards to modernization and building resilience for BRICS economies in the times of uncertainty and slower growth patterns.

17. There is a need for BRICS to establish risk warning and prevention mechanism to cope with financial market economy vulnerabilities.

18. BRICS should generally support priority of WTO multilateral trade regime and work together to ensure that all that is required is achieved to implement trade facilitation steps agreed in Bali December 2013. Joint BRICS policy study and response is needed on the challenge of plurilateral and mega-regional initiatives.

Peace and Security

19. There was general consensus that the current world order is characterized by chaos and growing instability. While the old world order is outdated, the transition to polycentric world is painfully slow with little progress on defining and agreeing to new rules for the road.

20. BRICS should strive for the world order based not on notion of exclusivity, but principles of inclusivity, indivisibility of security for all, cooperative and sustainable security behavior, and sovereign equality of all states. Nexus between peace, security and development should be recognized.

21. BRICS should cooperate to ensure that the international system is based on supremacy of international law and norms (over force). BRICS platform could become a hub in international law, while an idea of multi-hub system with issue-specific leadership of each of BRICS states should be developed further.

22. BRICS countries should be committed to multi-polarity, the rule of law and democratization of international relations, and build a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation.
23. BRICS countries should aim at a Declaration of principles and then at elaborating new legally binding Non-Aggression and Peaceful Coexistence Treaty open to all states around the globe. In the spirit of comprehensive peace and security BRICS should also set global system of trust and promote confidence building measures.
24. Creation of an Interregional Coordination Council of Regional security organizations with BRICS countries membership could be considered. It can become a consultative mechanism for BRICS countries with regards to arising global, regional and local security challenges.
25. In the area of internet governance and security it is vital that BRICS enhance cooperation aimed at pushing for greater independence of ICANN (away from the US control) as well as promote higher role for the multilateral and multi-stakeholder internet governance forums including the IGF, ITU, GGE and others.
26. BRICS CERTs should initiate a dialogue on sharing critical and vital information and best practices among the five countries.
27. A set of rules for responsible state behavior and cyber norms should be worked out by BRICS and further disseminated widely with the aim of general recognition and adherence. Best practice approach in defining the principle of state sovereignty with regard to state conduct in cyber-space and securing individual rights and freedoms from surveillance and illegal activities by state and non-state actors should be developed by relevant experts and institutions among BRICS.

Sustainable inclusive development and quality of life

28. Although sustainability and inclusion has been a key policy area for BRICS a number of factors make it difficult to identify and codify modality or common path of development for the five countries. Nevertheless BRICS should work out development paradigm based on principles of co-benefit sharing models, non-exclusive participation in the economic growth process, sharing of scientific and local knowledge. The development paradigm should be fundamentally strong yet flexible to accommodate local socio-political realities of individual BRICS economies.

29. BRICS should elaborate norms and standards to complement Post-2015 Development Agenda due for adoption in September 2015 within the United Nations framework. Its framework should be aligned with national strategies, plans, programs for meeting these goals domestically to reduce overlaps and building synergies in terms of planning cycles of each country.

30. Poverty and hunger eradication, quality of healthcare and education, economic growth, urbanization, unemployment, inequality and building up social infrastructure should be prioritized among BRICS. BRICS' New Development Bank should be seen as a relevant institution to fund social infrastructure projects.

31. BRICS should pay attention to people-centered sustainable and inclusive development. Data should be disaggregated in terms of gender and those policies should be worked out.

32. The new green economy in the form of efficient and clean energy technologies presents a viable incentive for further modernization and technological renewal. BRICS should consider different ways to support those developments, including through implementing a proactive fiscal policy and forming international partnerships in elaboration and exchange of green technologies.

33. BRICS countries should aim at elaboration of common approaches with regards to climate change. Immediate areas of convergence include clean technologies advancement and sharing in preventing adverse climate impact.

34. The five countries should enhance cooperation and promote best practice exchange in the area of adaptation mechanisms to global warming to reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience of the BRICS countries to climate change. It is also vital that BRICS engage real sector economy into cooperation as a key actor.

35. With regards to healthcare there is urgent need for BRICS to exercise leadership role within the WHO. The five countries should develop cooperation plan with a common approach to fighting TB, Hepatitis, joint prevention and control of Ebola and other epidemics, collaboration on the development of medicines and generic medicines, and the delivery of quality healthcare to combat HIV/AIDS, cooperating on anti-microbial resistance and providing for preventive healthcare and treatment of NCDs.

Culture and education

36. BRICS countries believe that they live through a historical moment, since it is the first time that the issue of culture, science and education was taken up to the high level of leaders' discussions.

37. We believe it is high time to enhance competitive edge for the BRICS Universities. In order to achieve higher role for the BRICS countries in formation of international educational space and elevating their own quality and influence in the global educational space it is vital to ensure free flow of academic exchanges, introduce scholarships and programs for students, researchers and scholars.

38. There is a need to facilitate the process of visa acquisition for the BRICS scholars and students in order to promote further academic exchange and enhance academic mobility. Also a visa-free travel for experts (BRICS Travel card) should be aimed at.

39. BRICS countries should consider elaboration of common standards in education which would facilitate exchanges of academics and students. BRICS could look into launching joint website with the provision of the information on all research and education opportunities in BRICS academic institutions.

40. There is a need to increase cultural exchange between the BRICS countries to overcome barriers introduced by differences in mentality and understandings of one and the same issue. BRICS should promote pathways to transform from “I-thinking” to “we-thinking”.

41. BRICS should consider introducing a five-country education plan in the spirit of the Erasmus program of the EU.

42. BRICS should promote higher degree of people to people contacts, mobility and mutual understanding. Intra-BRICS tourism should be promoted with the NDB financing for development of tourism infrastructure within those countries. In addition, more direct flights should be introduced between largest cities of BRICS.

Moscow
22-23 May, 2015