

# BRICS cooperation in agriculture



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# Background

The potential food deficit is considered to be the world's oldest problem because it has been under discussion for two centuries. However, it appears that the price of solving the global food problem will be significantly higher in the 21st century than it was before.

As it is stated in the Sustainable Development Goal 2 “The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication”.

BRICS countries are in the TOP20 of food exporting countries in the World, while Brazil and China are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> food exporter. Moreover, all five countries have strong agricultural research systems that are working on many of the challenges faced by developing countries, such as feeding a growing population in a sustainable way.

GOA Declaration (2016) stated:

*“we emphasise the importance of ensuring food security, and addressing malnutrition, eliminating hunger, inequality and poverty through increased agricultural production, productivity, sustainable management of natural resources and trade in agriculture among the BRICS countries. As the world's leading producers of agriculture products and home to large populations, we emphasise the importance of BRICS cooperation in agriculture. We recognize the importance of science-based agriculture and of deploying information and communication technology (ICT)”.*

## Joint Declaration of the Seventh Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture: :

*“we reiterate our commitment to further strengthen the agriculture cooperation. Joint mechanism of development of improved technologies, innovations and their sharing and enhancement of communication and coordination on major international and regional issues of common interest, such as productivity and profitability enhancement in BRICS countries, international trade, climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, food security and nutrition are imminent to promote further development of agriculture and safeguard and expand common interest”*

During the Eights meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of BRICS countries it was underlined, that “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”.

Very important issue is also a cooperation between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the New Development Bank (NDB), which was announced in October 2018 and states that the institutions “are set to increase their joint efforts to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, with a special focus on safeguarding water and soil resources”. Through the partnership, FAO and the NDB would aim to develop and implement joint programmes and projects in food and agriculture and rural infrastructure, including in water and irrigation; sustainable land use; soil management; and, the fight against desertification.

# Cooperation Initiative

Agricultural growth requires investments in R&D, and the BRICS could play a leading role in this. Biotechnology could also play a key role in these advances. Climate-smart agriculture will be essential to adapt to the uncertain changes that farmers face. This will rely heavily on cutting-edge research.

One of the major achievements of Brazil is its “agricultural miracle” which made the country one of the top food exporters in the end of the XX century. Brazil’s system of “precision agriculture” can be considered as one of the key initiatives for all the BRICS countries as the elements of this system can be implemented in all food producing countries which have the access to the funding.

# Cooperation Initiative

Russia as a country with very old agricultural scientific traditions can offer to create a think-tanks pool for agricultural research in order to make agriculture a science intensive sector, which will accumulate all the international knowledge in this field.

The key role in the international dialog can play the conferences and research projects in the base of leading universities and research centers of Russia.



# Proposed Key Areas

In line with the priorities identified in the BRICS ministerial declarations, the activities implemented within the initiative with focus on the five key areas:

- agricultural development to enhance food security and nutrition;
- climate change and agricultural resilience to its adverse impacts;
- strengthening research and innovation for improved agricultural sustainability;
- strengthening, sharing and exchange of information for better ICT application in BRICS agriculture.
- trade and agricultural investment.

The emphasis will be on boosting agri-investments in both public and private sectors, the need to protect small farmers, investments in water infrastructure, use of IT and communication technology and climate resilient agriculture.

# Work Arrangements

It is proposed that during the Russian presidency in BRICS 2020 the leaders will reaffirm their support for the establishment of the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform (ARP) initiated by India in 2016, as it was mentioned in Johannesburg Declaration 2018. There are different sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for different countries, so there should be created a single resource, a single window platform that could provide all the necessary documentation, assistance for the exporters and importers of agricultural goods from BRICS countries in order to guarantee safety and predictability to agricultural trade.

Russia will propose to step up intra-BRICS collaboration including within the frame of the Agriculture Research Platform and the Basic Agriculture Information Exchange System (BAIES).

Thank you for your attention!

