



## **BRICS STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE-RELATED TRADE MEASURES**

Today, the world is undergoing momentous changes compounded by global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation. Despite extensive and convincing scientific data on the current and anticipated climate change, there is great uncertainty over assessments of the actual form of climate change and its influence on ecosystems, economic as well as social processes and costs in different countries and regions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for climate change adaptation, mitigation and action. Countries, backed by a science- and equity-based approach, need to evaluate its specific responses to climate change and implement these within their contexts. Considering the uncertainty in assessing future climate change and its consequences the BRICS Members believe that it is necessary to take actions and are ready to responsibly and constructively participate in relevant international initiatives. Action to protect the environment and combat climate change should be based on scientifically proven assessment of risks, operationalization of the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances the necessity to take early measures to mitigate or prevent them, to adapt to negative impacts that are already happening, and to enhance the protection of national and societal interests from climate change.

BRICS Members recognize various national circumstances and challenges, the importance of ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and new forms of energy in the fight against climate change, as well as the right of countries to choose a pathway to low-emission development in accordance with their domestic circumstances, their climate action commitments, levels of development and policy space.

To promote equitable and cost-effective transition to low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development across the world we need to focus on the following aspects.

On various platforms, BRICS have brought attention to the growing trend towards unilateralism, trade protectionism and fragmentation of international cooperation jeopardizing trust, and consequently ambitious sustainable climate action.

### **1. Improvement of the Multilateral Trading System**

The fragmentation of the multilateral trading system provoked by “green” protectionist measures may prevent the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and UNFCCC commitments limiting the possibility of faster and cheaper deployment of low-carbon industries, as well as leading to such as unilateral trade measures, including but not limited to tariff measures, that go against WTO rules and principles and restricting access to modern technologies. In this context, BRICS Members should oppose unilateralism and “green” protectionism, uphold the position that the WTO is the main fora for international trade rules-setting, exchange views on how best the WTO can promote investment flows especially for developing and least developed countries, maintain security and stability of global supply chains. It is vital to emphasize the importance of ensuring that all measures taken to tackle climate change, environmental pollution and loss of bio diversity are designed, adopted and implemented in full conformity with the WTO rules and consistent with the Rio conventions and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and do not constitute means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. BRICS Members, in this regard, support the COP28’s First Global Stock Take’s call for the multilateral system to ensure that “measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade”.

Furthermore, BRICS Members affirm that the importance of upholding the WTO provisions multilateral system should recognize the WTO’s special and differential treatment provisions and the UNFCCC’s principle of equity, Common but Differentiated

Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR–RC) within national circumstances, encouraging all nations to engage in climate action, while considering their unique circumstances and development levels.

BRICS Members should ensure that environmental policies do not result in protectionist or trade distorting measures, which cause competitive imbalances and hinder market access, stand against the introduction of protectionist and trade-distortive measures, as well as market distortive subsidies, under the pretext of implementing environmental policies, which lead to competitive distortions and create barriers to market access.

BRICS Members should ensure that measures taken to combat climate change should respect WTO commitments, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. To this end, BRICS Members should cooperate and prevent the adoption of such measures in international fora.

The facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services can meaningfully contribute to achieving climate goals and developing low-carbon industries. To that end, interested BRICS Members should work towards addressing existing challenges to trade in environmental goods and services, including unilateral trade-restrictive measures. Interested BRICS Members could also work towards shaping the scope of environmental goods and services.

BRICS Members are also aware the standards, testing and certification protocols for green goods are being done with less consideration of developing countries realities and capabilities. BRICS Members emphasize that standards, testing and certification of green products must not be done to create further trade distorting non-tariff barriers to trade and that developing countries specialized agencies and authorities must be capacitated and actively participate in standard, testing and certification processes. BRICS Members agree to enhance cooperation on the standards, testing and certification of green products and to exchange, where appropriate, the information on best practices and expertise in these areas.

BRICS Members call on the developed countries to implement their commitments made at the UNFCCC, such as the finance, technology and skills transfer, and capacity building.

BRICS Members will, whenever appropriate, also support promotion of mechanisms with a focus on long tenure, concessional financing for the clean technology sectors.

We also note that digitalization of trade procedures and customs clearance not only reduce trade costs and make trade more inclusive, but also significantly reduce GHG emissions and contribute to forest conservation. Thus, BRICS Members shall endeavour, where appropriate and in accordance with national capacities, to increasingly accept electronic copies of supporting documents required for import, export, or transit formalities.

BRICS Members underline that developed countries shall provide financial resources to assist developing countries with respect to both mitigation and adaption in continuation of their existing obligations under the UNFCCC and should continue to take the lead in providing and scaling up mitigation action by mobilizing climate finance, in line with their respective obligations and taking into account the different needs and priorities of developing countries, including least developed countries.

BRICS Members underscore that support provided by developed countries should be commensurate with the climate actions taken by developing countries including least developed countries. Ambition of action needs to match with the ambition of support to developing countries, including least developed countries.

BRICS Members also call on developed countries to fulfil their commitments on finance, technology and skills transfer prior to creating unilateral coercive and punitive cross border measures. The climate green energy transition offers our global society an opportunity to rectify historic injustices – developed countries are called to support this opportunity and not create policies that perpetuate historic legacy injustices and structural impediments to socio-economic development for all.

## **2. Improvement of Access to Technology and Technologic Neutrality**

The non-discriminatory access to modern technology is crucial to achieving climate and environmental goals. We note the gap between developed and developing countries in access to vital technologies aimed at combating climate change and achieving the carbon neutrality, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. BRICS Members should promote an equal and non-discriminative access to technologies that contribute to the achievement of global environmental and climate goals to all countries, especially developing, including least developed ones.

BRICS Members recognize that all available technologies should be used to achieve climate goals. To this end, BRICS Members oppose arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination of energy sources with equivalent end-use characteristics in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

We need to enhance cooperation in the development of technologies, know-hows and innovations aimed at combating climate change and protecting the environment. We should effectively strengthen our cooperation in the sphere of high-tech research, innovation, and enhance our capabilities for scientific and technological innovation and competition on the global market.

BRICS Members need to create a friendly business environment for voluntary technology sharing, including a set of appropriate rules and channels for technology transfer to ensure its affordability and accessibility. To this end, interested BRICS Members agree to explore working towards creating a common BRICS environmentally sound technologies platform on a voluntary basis.

## **3. Improvement of Cooperation and Expertise Exchange**

BRICS Members should exchange expertise in the field of combating climate change and environmental protection, in particular in the area of green standards, and green trade. Inviting the international organizations such as UNIDO, UNCTAD, WTO and others, to compile a compendium of expertise and best practices on green products and industries to render support for the development of such products and industries for BRICS Members.

BRICS Members also commit to coordinating to the extent possible on the UNFCCC's Forum on the Impacts of Implementation of Response Measures, and its Katowice Committee of Experts.

BRICS Members should strengthen and encourage cooperation between their metrology, standardization and accreditation authorities or bodies in the field of elaboration, adoption and implementation of metrological technical regulations and standards aimed at combating climate change and protecting the environment.

BRICS Members commit to further collaboration on minerals beneficiations needed for low-carbon emission technologies future. In this regard, BRICS Members will endeavour to collaborate to ensure that mineral resources within BRICS Members and our regions are utilised for the sustainable development objectives of our countries, our regions and its people. In this regard, BRICS Members will evaluate trade support mechanisms and activities that can further enhance this collaboration.

BRICS Members recognize that critical and non-critical minerals and other raw materials are crucial for new energy industries. In this context, BRICS Members should establish a regular dialogue on critical and non-critical minerals and other raw materials and their extraction and processing technologies with the aim to ensure the resilience of trade flows, and value addition close to source, as well as consider mechanisms to maintain an open, inclusive and fair trade of mineral resources among BRICS Members.