



BRICS PRINCIPLES ON TRADE FACILITATION IN AGRICULTURE

Recalling,

the Action Plan 2021-2024 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS Countries, which, *inter alia*, promotes improvement of trade facilitation, digital agricultural solutions and cooperation in the field of SPS measures;

the Joint Communiqué of the BRICS Trade Ministers of 9 June 2022, which promotes trade facilitation;

the BRICS Statement on Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System and Reforming the WTO (2022), which, in para 12, calls for the continuation of the reform process to achieve fair and balanced rules for agriculture;

the Joint Declaration of the XI Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture (2021), which, in para 17 on Trade Facilitation, states as follows:

We recognize that international agri-food trade is critical in achieving global food security and ensuring adequate nutrition. We also recognize that enhancing market predictability and avoiding disruption of food supply chains is critical to ensure stable access to food. We reiterate the importance of an open, transparent, inclusive, and nondiscriminatory multilateral trading system consistent with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

the BRICS Digital Economy Partnership Framework (2022), which encourages the use of digital means to promote trade facilitation, such as paperless customs clearance, use of electronic documents, mutual recognition of digital authentications, and use of electronic payment; and which aims to improve port management, logistics, supply chain and trade facilitation work;

BRICS Members agree on the following in order to facilitate trade in agricultural products, improve sustainability of the agricultural sector and resilience of the supply chains:

1. BRICS Members agree to elaborate concrete measures, through appropriate mechanisms, to facilitate and improve intra-BRICS trade. In this regard, BRICS Members should endeavour through the relevant domestic departments and agencies, *inter alia*, to exchange their practices related to SPS and TBT regulatory issues as provided for in the correspondent WTO Agreements.

2. BRICS Members agree that recognition of equivalence of SPS measures, even if they differ from the national ones, should take into account *inter alia*, all the evidence provided by the exporting countries, in particular results of inspections that ensure appropriate level of SPS protection. BRICS Members strive for efficient mutual technical assistance on the issue.

3. BRICS Members should oppose unilateral trade-restrictive measures, which are inconsistent with existing WTO provisions and that directly or indirectly affect trade in agricultural products and agricultural inputs, as well as measures adopted under the pretext of climate change and environmental protection.

4. BRICS Members recognize that transition to low-carbon development, including the solid fuels phase-out, should not, in particular, threaten food security and sustainable economic development. The transition to low-carbon fuels should take into consideration the socioeconomic needs and technological capabilities of each country, especially developing and least developed ones. BRICS Members should put forward that all trade restrictive measures taken under the pretext of climate change and environmental protection that affect trade in agricultural products shall be science-based, shall not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination and shall not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

5. BRICS Members also agree on the importance of discussing the application of WTO-consistent export prohibitions and restrictions and minimizing their impact on the

accessibility of international food markets and the food security of countries, including the vulnerable food import-dependent developing countries.

6. Recognizing the role agricultural production and productivity play in fueling international agri-food trade and safeguarding global food security, BRICS Members highlight the importance of promoting investments, enhancing agricultural production and productivity, as well as promoting collaboration and coordination on developing agriculture and agriculture-related technologies and know-how, and sharing relevant scientific knowledge and experience. BRICS Members also highlight the importance of enhancing access to finance required for trade in food in particular financing of food imports by vulnerable food import-dependent developing countries, agricultural inputs and bolstering agricultural production and productivity.

7. BRICS Members recognize the importance of reducing trade costs in order to facilitate agricultural trade. To this end, BRICS Members will identify areas of collaboration within a cooperative framework.

8. BRICS Members underline the importance of digital technologies in trade facilitation and the global implementation of appropriate new technologies and smart solutions such as e-certification, traceability and supply chain integrity technologies for agricultural products, electronic bills of lading and conformity assessment platforms. The BRICS Digital Economy Partnership Framework of 2022 encourages the use of digital means to promote trade facilitation, such as paperless customs clearance, use of electronic documents, mutual recognition of digital authentications and use of electronic payment. The use of electronic bills of lading could serve as an effective approach to promote facilitation of trade in both agricultural and non-agricultural goods. Nowadays, the use of electronic bills of lading has become a trend in international trade. More than half of BRICS Members are applying electronic bills of lading in international trade. Recognizing the positive role of electronic bills of lading in the transportation of goods, including but not limited to the agricultural bulk cargo and containers, BRICS Members agree to exchange their best practices by compiling a compendium in this regard.

9. BRICS Members agree to mobilize their efforts with the aim to foster the WTO discussions on the outstanding issues in agriculture negotiations including through any coordinated positions on such issues.