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Declaration of the 8th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting
(6 July 2022, People’s Republic of China)

1. We, the Ministers responsible for communications of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa, met virtually under the Chairship of the People’s Republic of China at the 8th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting on 6 July 2022.
2. We note that, with its transformation capabilities, application and catalyzing effect, telecommunication/information communications technologies (ICTs) have witnessed intensive research and development (R&D) investment worldwide. The emerging digital technologies are developing rapidly, reinforcing one another, and reshaping global social and economic landscape.
3. We note that telecommunication/ICTs and emerging digital technologies, amidst the outbreak of COVID-19, have played an important role in combating the pandemic and help mitigate the adverse impact on economy.
4. Under the theme of the 2022 BRICS cooperation - “*Fostering High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development*”, we are committed to strengthening cooperation in the field of telecommunication/ICTs among BRICS countries, jointly creating new opportunities for development.
5. Recalling the decisions made during the previous BRICS Communications Ministers meetings, we have substantially discussed on the theme of *Deepening Cooperation on Stronger, Greener and Healthier development by using ICTs to achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* and agreed to further cooperate in the following areas:

27 **FACILITATING DIGITAL INNOVATION**

28 6. We note that telecommunication/ICTs not only offer a strategic opportunity for
29 scientific and technological development and industrial transformation, but also a
30 major field of international cooperation, and encourage sharing of experiences,
31 best practices and developments among BRICS members for future development.

32 7. We recognize the important role of international organizations and relevant
33 multilateral forums in the field of ICTs in facilitating technological innovation,
34 and we reiterate our commitment to enhance continuous exchange of ideas and
35 cooperation between BRICS members in International Telecommunication Union
36 (ITU).

37 8. We recognize the importance of highly-skilled professionals, and encourage
38 cooperation among BRICS think-tanks and enterprises, including online and
39 offline training programmes and seminars of scholars on a regular basis on
40 cutting-edge ICT technology R&D, and express the interests of creating a pool of
41 ICT professionals for BRICS member countries.

42 9. We acknowledge the supportive role played by public service platforms and
43 encourage BIFN branches to take forward their engagements to cooperate on the
44 innovation and development of ICTs among all BRICS countries.

45 **ADVANCING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

46 10. We note that the significant role of well-developed digital economy in building
47 the national competitive advantages, and encourage the integration of the Internet,
48 big data and Artificial Intelligence with the economy, to enable the upgrading and
49 transformation of traditional industries as well as fostering new industries and
50 business models.

51 11. We recognize that telecommunication/ICTs as well as digital technology is a key
52 driver for industrial transformation and has the potential to improve production

53 efficiency while reducing costs. We also note that there exist various challenges
54 facing the digital transformation of traditional industries, and encourage the
55 development of diversified digital transformation solutions in upgrading these
56 industries, such as making efforts on pilot projects, training programmes and
57 experience sharing.

58 12. We note the important role of telecommunication/ICTs for the development of
59 MSMEs, and encourage the provision of inclusive services that are
60 cloud-empowered and data-driven, in order to accelerate digitalization of
61 enterprises and industrial chains, as well as to promote digital ecosystem.

62 **EXPANDING DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY**

63 13. We note that the global telecommunication/ICTs infrastructure currently is
64 developing at pace, based on space-terrestrial networks and cloud-network
65 integration, and moving towards an intelligent and comprehensive infrastructure
66 that is high-speed and ubiquitous, smart and low-carbon, secure and reliable,
67 affordable and accessible with potential to empower the sustainable development
68 and further stimulating economic and social transformation.

69 14. We recognize that telecommunication/ICTs infrastructure is the cornerstone of the
70 digital economy, and encourage the accelerated development of new ICTs
71 infrastructure as well as the transformation of network facilities, to lay a solid
72 foundation for economic and social development.

73 15. We note that information exchange flourishes in the context of globalization, and
74 encourage the enhanced connectivity among BRICS countries and willing to have
75 further discussion at DBTF meetings in the future.

76 **PROMOTING DIGITAL INCLUSIVENESS**

77 16. We recognize the importance of affordable and equitable access to
78 telecommunication/ICTs as well as digital technologies and services for all,

79 particularly people living in remote and rural areas, including women, persons
80 with disabilities and specific needs and the elderly, in order to bridge the digital
81 divides.

82 17. We support actions to improve affordable information accessibility, including by
83 encouraging telecommunication/ICTs product and service providers to integrate
84 accessibility and security into product design. As well, by developing hardware
85 and software products that are accessible for both the elderly and persons with
86 disabilities and specific needs, so that they can enjoy the digital technology
87 conveniently, securely and equally.

88 18. We note that telecommunication/ICTs and digital technologies are crucial to
89 sustainable development, and thus encourage the provision of skills training in
90 areas such as e-commerce and new media applications. Providing supportive
91 funds to facilitate digital skills development for people living in remote and rural
92 areas, particularly women, to develop new business models such as e-commerce
93 and online live-streaming, so as to improve employment and promote
94 entrepreneurship.

95 19. We acknowledge that digital literacy is the foundation for the human-centric
96 development of the digital economy, and encourage the exchange of best
97 practices and experiences on digital education in schools and improving of
98 vocational training, so as to ensure that all the people in BRICS countries can
99 enjoy the benefits brought by the telecommunication/ICTs and digital
100 technologies.

101 **DEEPENING COOPERATION IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE**

102 20. We note that with the rapid development of the digital economy, digital
103 governance challenges are rising, including in the areas of platform economy,
104 cross-border data flows, protection of personal information, and ownership of
105 data assets, and other associated policy and legal issues among others.

- 106 21. We reiterate the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to ICTs
107 development and security, including technical advancement, business
108 development, of safeguarding the security of States and public interests, and of
109 respecting the rights to privacy of individuals, and we encourage open discussion
110 on policy, regulation, and practices among BRICS countries to deepen
111 cooperation in digital governance.
- 112 22. We recognize the importance of strengthening cooperation on digital governance
113 among BRICS members for a stable and sound development of the digital
114 economy, while respecting each member's unique features in terms of national
115 legislation and regulation.
- 116 23. We recognize the importance of a human-centric prosperity of all international
117 efforts towards digital transformation while respecting the important role of
118 international organizations for developing international standards and principles
119 promoting security and interoperability, etc.
- 120 24. We note that a study group has been established for carrying out studies on AI
121 under the Work Plan of the BIFN and encourage the studies on the operation of
122 autonomous physical and virtual systems with artificial intelligence elements
123 both on the level of technical aspects and ethical codes.
- 124 25. We note that data has become the major element underpinning the economic and
125 social development and reshaping the production methods in the real economy,
126 and thus encourage cooperation on data governance to identify common ground
127 in this regard.
- 128 26. We reiterate the importance of maintaining the security and stability of
129 telecommunication/ICTs supply chains, in line with the national security
130 considerations, and encourage joint efforts to create an open, fair, inclusive, and
131 equitable environment for the development of digital economy, supporting
132 post-pandemic economy recovery.



- 133 27. We note the importance of international legal frameworks for protection of global
134 nature of Internet, while respecting applicable national legal frameworks. We
135 reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of an open, secure, stable, accessible,
136 peaceful ICT environment and accountable, safe and trusted Internet.
- 137 28. We appreciate the important work being carried out by ITU and G20, such as ITU
138 2020 Guidelines on Online Child Protection and G20 High Level Principles for
139 Children Protection and Empowerment in the Digital Environment. We also note
140 the arising challenge of protecting children from all types of online exploitation
141 and other harmful content that is detrimental to their health and growth and
142 recognize the urgent importance of the protection of children in the digital space,
143 and encourage the public awareness-raising of the online risks faced by children,
144 and to provide them a safe and healthy online environment.
- 145 29. Recalling the XIV BRICS Summit Beijing Declaration, we support information
146 exchanges and technical cooperation on AI technology, and noting the concerns
147 on the risks and ethical dilemma related to AI, encourage BRICS members to
148 work together to deal with concerns, share best practices, conduct comparative
149 study on the subject toward developing a common governance approach which
150 would guide BRICS members on ethical and responsible use of AI while
151 facilitating the development of AI.

152 **STOCKTAKING AND WAY FORWARD**

- 153 30. We reaffirm the decisions of previous BRICS Communications Ministers
154 Meetings, and recognize the role of the Working Group on ICTs Cooperation, the
155 BIFN Council and the Digital BRICS Task Force (DBTF) in implementing the
156 decisions of the Ministers. We reiterate our commitment to continuous
157 cooperation and regular interaction to take stock of the decisions and the status of
158 their implementation.
- 159 31. We note the establishment of the Digital Economy Working Group, upgraded



160 from the E-commerce Working Group. We support the coordination and
161 interaction between Digital Economy Working Group and Working Group on
162 ICTs Cooperation.

163 32. We recognize the important role of the ITU in the development and dissemination
164 of international standards, the study of new and emerging digital technologies and
165 telecommunications/ICTs, and we support strengthening BRICS cooperation on
166 these issues in the margins of the ITU.

167 33. We reaffirm the commitment made at previous BRICS Communications
168 Ministers Meetings to continuously strengthen cooperation in the field of
169 telecommunication/ICTs in other international organizations and multilateral fora.

170 34. We support the advancement of the work of DBTF and note with satisfaction the
171 progress achieved in 2022, including the adoption of the Work Plan for DBTF
172 and the outcomes of the first Digital BRICS Forum, and appreciate the efforts
173 made by DBTF in promoting digital transformation and technology applications.
174 We encourage further collaboration on digital governance. We encourage the
175 DBTF to actively implement its Work Plan to boost the mutually beneficial
176 cooperation.

177 35. We recall the decisions made in the New Delhi Declaration at the 13th BRICS
178 Summit regarding further discussion on India's proposal of a BRICS Platform on
179 Digital Public Goods, and appreciate India's efforts in sharing its digital public
180 goods relating to financial inclusion, health care and education.

181 36. We note with satisfaction the progress made by BIFN Council in 2022, including
182 adoption of the Work Plan. We encourage the BIFN to actively implement its
183 Work Plan and to advance the planning and launching of BIFN official website,
184 having linkages to the main website of BRICS. We recall the Declaration of the
185 4th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting that the Council will be supported
186 by a BIFN Secretariat to be set up at a location of one of the BRICS Members

- 187 and consider further discussion on this issue.
- 188 37. We commend the efforts of BIFN in facilitating exchange and cooperation of the
189 research on cutting-edge technologies, and encourage the BIFN to further
190 intensify collaboration on technological innovation in the fields including but not
191 limited to Artificial Intelligence, next generation communications, Internet
192 application in Industry 4.0, electromagnetic field exposure, big data and block
193 chain among others, and to explore the possibilities of BRICS common papers,
194 with its work reported to the next Ministers Meeting.
- 195 38. We note that the BRICS Forum on Future Networks Innovation 2022 has
196 promoted in-depth discussion on the theme of *Together with BRICS Partners,*
197 *Promoting High-Quality Development with Network Innovation,* providing a
198 platform for BRICS members to exchange views on future network technology.
199 We encourage BRICS member, on a voluntary basis, to co-organize BRICS
200 Forum on Future Networks Innovation, workshops, enterprises cooperation
201 events and other activities.
- 202 39. Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa commend China's BRICS Chairship in
203 2022 and express their appreciation for successfully holding the 8th BRICS
204 Communication Ministers Meeting.
- 205 40. Brazil, Russia, India and China extend full support to South Africa for hosting the
206 9th BRICS Communication Ministers Meeting.

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