

# **SAINT-PETERSBURG DECLARATION**

## **VII BRICS LEGAL FORUM**

*19 November 2020*

We, the representatives of the legal communities of the BRICS Member States, having gathered online on 18-19 November 2020 at the VII BRICS Legal Forum entitled “Law and legal order: values and principles in the context of global challenges of modernity”;

FOLLOWING the provisions of the final documents of the heads of the BRICS Member States, including the Moscow Declaration of 17 November 2020 (made in Moscow, Russian Federation);

RECOGNISING the importance of legal values for maintaining the stability of legal systems and creating a just, democratic and multipolar world order rooted in the mutual respect of legitimate interests of all States and generally recognized rules and principles of international law;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need of strengthening the cooperation based on the principles of equality, respect of sovereignty and multilateralism within BRICS;

TAKING COGNIZANCE of the deepening of cooperation among the BRICS Member States in the sphere of law and jurisprudence, in particular, the promoting of the exchange of knowledge and best practices within BRICS;

hereby DECLARE as follows:

1. We affirm our commitment to the attaining of the objectives set in the final documents of the BRICS summits by way of taking part in the development of the legal framework based on the principles of justice, equality, inclusiveness, respect for social and economic human rights, as well as rule of law.
2. We will continue our efforts to create the BRICS Dispute Resolution Network. We support the initiatives of the working group on arbitration to develop the rules and concepts required for the functioning of the BRICS Dispute Resolution Centres. We intend to expand it to include and serve the interests of emerging

markets and developing economies, through capacity building and promoting democratization and inclusiveness in international commercial disputes resolution.

3. We recognise the need to receive support and endorsement from our governments and business communities in creating and promoting the BRICS Dispute Resolution Network.
4. We support the initiatives aimed at improving the quality of legal education, fulfilment of human capacity in the legal sphere and creating social elevators for young lawyers.

We emphasise the importance of training and capacity development of qualified legal personnel to operate effectively and efficiently in international legal sphere, to pursue and defend cases involving commercial and national interests on the global stage without bias and in a fair, open and transparent legal institutional environment, in particular in the sphere of international law, finance, intellectual property and sports. We support the initiative undertaken by the participants of the Forum for the purpose of developing legal education and professional capacity building and will explore avenues of greater collaboration and participation in such initiatives.

5. We note the role of the reforms aimed at the constitutional development of the BRICS Member States in ensuring the stability of the constitutional system, as well as in strengthening state sovereignty, territorial integrity and forming a state founded on the rule of law to promote inclusive and sustainable growth predicated on values of human and social welfare.
6. We affirm our commitment to fighting against terrorism, terror financing, arms and drug trafficking, countering corruption and money laundering, as well as combatting human trafficking as well as other transnational crimes by developing legal capacity, cooperation and knowledge exchange.
7. We attach great importance to the improving of the competitiveness of the national jurisdictions of the BRICS Member States by creating conditions for

transparency and impartiality of the legal and judicial process in terms of enforcement of contracts and inexpensive and expeditious resolution of disputes. We support the measures taken by the BRICS Member States in order to protect the businesses and the rights of investors. We urge the governments to undertake on priority the issue of mutual recognition of judicial verdicts and awards amongst BRICS Member States.

8. We will further develop our cooperation in the sphere of developing legal and regulatory frameworks to govern developments in artificial intelligence, fintech, lawtech and information and communication technologies in order to prevent cybercrime and ensure network security and in order to leverage the drivers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution.
9. We are aware of the importance of the exchange of young specialists in the sphere of law, in particular, by way of implementing the annual BRICS Legal Talent Programme and will continue to expand its scope and sphere.
10. We will ensure fair representation of women lawyers in all the activities and committees and task force created to carry out the work of the BRICS Legal Forum, and will bring into activity section of Women Lawyers of BRICS during the next Forum meeting in India.
11. We will continue the cooperation among the BRICS legal communities in the following spheres:
  - in the sphere of mediation in order to combine the best practices and improve the mechanism of alternative dispute resolution in the BRICS Member States;
  - in the sphere of sports law in order to exchange experience in elaborating sports legislation, preventing doping in sports and competitive activities.
12. We recognise the urgent need to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. In this regard, we support the initiatives of the BRICS Member States aimed at ensuring health security, maintaining sustainable

development, well-being of the population, business recovery, and protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the citizens of the BRICS Member States.

13. Bearing in mind the fact that the VII BRICS Legal Forum has been included in the official calendar of the Russian chairmanship in BRICS in 2020 and sectoral meetings mentioned in the XII BRICS Summit Moscow Declaration 2020, we note the need to approach the Governments of our States for the support of initiatives put forward by the BRICS legal communities.
14. Participants of the VII BRICS Legal Forum express their gratitude to the hosting party, i.e. the Association of Lawyers of Russia and Saint-Petersburg State University, and highly appreciate their efforts in organizing a very high-quality Forum in terms of both content and hospitality.
15. We also unanimously accept and endorse the proposal of the Bar Association of India to host the VIII BRICS Legal Forum in 2021 in India in a period to be agreed on.

**Association of Lawyers of Russia**

Vladimir Pligin

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**Brazilian Bar Association**

Marcus Vinicius Furtado Coelho

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**The Bar Association of India**

Prashant Kumar

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**China Law Society**

Zhang Mingqi

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**Law Society of South Africa**

Mabaeng Denise Lenyai

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**Legal Practice Council of South Africa**

Kathleen Dlepu

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