

## **Joint Communiqué on the Outcome of the Meeting of BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa**

Moscow, May 22, 2015

The participants of the meeting expressed their concern about internal crises that have emerged in a number of states in the region in recent years. They firmly advocated that these crises should be resolved in accordance with the international law and only through peaceful means, without resorting to force and external interference and through establishing broad national dialogue with due respect for independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries of the region. The participants emphasized the legitimacy of the aspirations of the peoples of the region to enjoy full political and social freedoms and for respect to human rights.

BRICS members stand for consolidating international efforts to combat the global threats of violent extremism and terrorism. They stressed that counter-terrorism measures should be undertaken on the firm basis of international law under the aegis of the UN and its Security Council. The participants of the meeting supported the Russian initiative of conducting at the UNSC a comprehensive analysis of causes that have led to the outburst of terrorist activity in the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa.

In the course of the meeting the role of the UN Security Council as the international body bearing the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security was underlined. It was also stressed that military interventions that have not been authorized by the Security Council are incompatible with the UN Charter and unacceptable.

Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BRICS states expressed their deep concern with regard to the continuing violence in Syria, deterioration of humanitarian situation and growing threat of international terrorism and extremism in that country.

The participants confirmed their solid support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syria and the need for a peaceful solution, led by the Syrians, to the conflict. They also called for renewed efforts towards a political and diplomatic solution in Syria through a broad dialogue on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué of June 30, 2012 without preconditions. In this regard they positively assessed the inter-Syrian consultations with the participation of delegations from the Government of Syria and opposition groups, held in Moscow in January and April 2015 as well as the efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General Staffan de Mistura aimed at the resumption of Geneva process.

While condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the BRICS members called upon all Syrians to join ranks in the face of this dangerous threat

and urged the international community to strictly abide by all the obligations pursuant to UNSC resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015).

While condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances, BRICS countries called upon the international community to remain united while addressing any allegations on the use of chlorine gas as a weapon in Syria and stressed the importance of continued cooperation between OPCW Technical Secretariat and Syrian authorities.

The BRICS states expressed serious concern about the escalation of the armed conflict in Libya, highlighting its extremely negative consequences for the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa and the Sahel region. It was noted that the military intervention into this country in 2011 led to the breakdown of integrated state institutes, effective army and law-enforcement bodies, which in turn resulted in the rise of activities of terrorist and extremist groups. The participants expressed their support for the steps undertaken by legitimate Libyan authorities in combating the terrorist threat. Underlining the urgency to safeguard the sovereignty of the country and its territorial integrity, they reaffirmed the need to overcome the dissensions between Libyan political forces and to achieve an agreement on the formation of a National Unity Government as soon as possible. In this context, they expressed their support for the efforts to foster the inter-Libyan dialogue by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Libya Bernardino Leon, by the neighboring countries and by the African Union.

The participants of the meeting expressed their concern over the continuing armed conflict in the Yemen Republic which led to the killing of thousands of civilians, including women and children, and to the destruction of a significant part of vital civilian infrastructure, bringing the situation in Yemen on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. The participants welcomed the appointment of a new Special Envoy for Yemen and expressed their hope that Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed's work will be successful in reviving a peaceful and inclusive Yemeni-led political process that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people.

In this regard the BRICS states called for the immediate ceasefire in Yemen, urging all parties to the Yemeni conflict to resume the nation-wide dialogue in which representatives of Yemeni political forces and different groups of Yemeni population could participate in discussing the future of their country. The participants supported the UNSC call on the Secretary-General to convene a conference of all Yemeni stakeholders, with the intention of brokering a consensus-based political solution to Yemen's crisis.

The BRICS members declared their readiness to provide relevant humanitarian aid and diplomatic assistance in resolving the situation in Yemen.

The participants in the meeting were unanimous that the period of the fundamental transformations that is taking place in the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa states should not be used as pretext to delay resolution of long-standing conflicts, in particular the Palestinian-Israeli. In this regard they confirmed their commitment to achieving the comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the universally recognized international legal framework including respective UN Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The BRICS states called for an early resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations aiming at establishing an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State within the borders based on June 4, 1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as its capital. They supported the Russian role in the Middle East Quartet aimed at achieving these ends as soon as possible. The BRICS countries expressed their readiness to contribute on a bigger scale towards a just and lasting resolution of the Middle East conflict.

The participants of the meeting appealed to the Palestinians and Israelis to undertake positive steps towards each other to restore mutual trust and create favorable conditions for restarting talks, avoiding unilateral steps, in particular settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They stood for overcoming the inter-Palestinian split based on the PLO political platform and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The BRICS members welcomed the decisions reached on April 2, 2015 in the course of negotiations between “5+1” and Iran concerning the key parameters of the final settlement of the situation related to the Iranian nuclear program. They confirmed every country’s right to peacefully develop its atomic energy under IAEA safeguards and observing the norms of international law.

They dully noted the importance of building a system of relations in the Gulf zone that would guarantee equal and reliable security to all States of the sub-region.

The participants decided to convene consultations at the level of Deputies Foreign Ministers of BRICS countries once every year with a venue to be a country hosting BRICS summit. The next consultations will be held in India in 2016.

The participants of the meeting also agreed on the advisability of holding regular consultations on the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa topics at various venues, including the UN, and confirmed their support for holding informal meetings of their representatives.