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BRICS Statement on Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System and Reforming the WTO

1. Reaffirming the support of BRICS member countries for an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied in the World Trade Organization (WTO);

2. Emphasizing the importance of an effectively functioning WTO with all its members abiding by the WTO rules and complying with their WTO commitments to preserve its central role in promoting predictability, stability and legal certainty for international trade;

3. Recognizing the urgent need to collectively address global economic challenges, including economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring equitable access to medical products, essential services and technologies needed to underpin the recovery, while narrowing the development divide between the developing and developed members that in many cases is widening due to the pandemic;

4. Recognizing the urgency and our willingness to engage constructively to pursue the necessary WTO reform with the aim of strengthening resilience, efficacy and authority of the organization and promoting inclusive economic growth and development;

27 5. Recognizing the importance of industrial development
28 for sustained economic growth and prosperity, and the
29 importance of more coherent considerations of the relationship
30 between industrial development, trade and investment;

31 We hereby declare the following:

32 6. We stress the need for all WTO members to strengthen
33 the rules-based multilateral trading system to support trade and
34 development. It is critical that all WTO Members avoid
35 unilateral and protectionist measures that run counter to the
36 spirit and rules of the WTO. BRICS members underscore the
37 importance of focusing on trade matters that fall under the
38 competence of the WTO.

39 7. We will actively participate to ensure the WTO reform is
40 framed in a balanced manner, including in relation to agenda
41 setting which must take into account the interests and concerns
42 of all members, while considering that developing countries
43 including LDCs constitute the majority of WTO membership.
44 The reform process should be open, transparent, inclusive and in
45 accordance with the objectives and principles enshrined in
46 Marrakesh Agreement. The WTO reform shall preserve its core
47 values and fundamental principles and enhance its relevance in
48 global economic governance. The WTO reform must preserve
49 the pre-eminent role of the WTO for setting global trade rules
50 and governance, supporting the inclusive development and
51 promoting the rights and interests of its members, including
52 developing members and LDCs. We recognize that special and

53 differential treatment is a tool to facilitate the achievement of
54 WTO objectives with respect to economic growth and
55 development.

56 8. We emphasize the top priority and urgency of launching
57 the selection process of the Appellate Body members to restore
58 the binding two-tier multilateral dispute settlement mechanism.
59 We agree that the Appellate Body crisis should be resolved
60 without further delay and should not be linked with other issues.

61 9. We reaffirm our commitment to a successful 12th WTO
62 Ministerial Conference (MC12), an important opportunity to
63 restore trust among members, raise confidence in the
64 multilateral trading system and enhance the credibility of the
65 WTO. We call on WTO members to sustain momentum and to
66 build on progress already achieved with a view to reaching
67 tangible, realistic, and meaningful outcomes at MC12 including
68 on the mandated issues of negotiations.

69 10. We express deep concern about the negative impact of
70 COVID-19 on global trade, disruptions to supply chains, and
71 uneven economic recovery. We call for enhanced international
72 cooperation including in the WTO to fight the pandemic, to
73 ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, as well as diagnostics
74 and therapeutics, to bridge the international "vaccine divide", to
75 promote technology transfer. We call on a comprehensive
76 outcome on the WTO response to Covid-19 encompassing all
77 aspects of the issue, including the temporary TRIPS waiver
78 proposal, improving transparency and monitoring, advancing

79 facilitation, aimed at enhancing cooperation on fighting
80 COVID-19.

81 11. We urge all WTO Members to work constructively to
82 achieve meaningful outcomes in line with the mandate and
83 ensure timely conclusion of the fisheries subsidies negotiations
84 by MC12. We recognize that appropriate and effective special
85 and differential treatment is a tool to economic growth and
86 development for developing members and should be an integral
87 part of the negotiations.

88 12. We call for continuing the reform process to achieve
89 fair and balanced rules for agriculture. We also recognize the
90 importance of existing ministerial mandates. These matters have
91 become increasingly urgent in the context of growing food
92 insecurity in the world.

93 13. Underline that all measures taken to tackle climate change
94 and bio diversity loss must be designed, adopted and implemented in
95 full conformity with the WTO agreements and must not constitute a
96 means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised
97 restriction on international trade and must not create unnecessary
98 obstacles to international trade. We express our concern at any
99 discriminatory measure that will distort international trade, risk new
100 trade frictions and shift the burden of addressing climate change to
101 other trading partners, developing countries and BRICS members.

102 14. We agree to enhance communication among BRICS
103 missions to the WTO in order to deepen understanding.

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