

English translation of Prime Minister's opening remarks at the 12th BRICS Virtual Summit

November 17, 2020

Your Excellency President Putin,
Your Excellency President Xi,
Your Excellency President Ramaphosa,
Your Excellency President Bolsonaro,

First of all, I congratulate President Putin for the successful handling of BRICS. Because of your guidance and initiative, BRICS has been able to maintain its momentum even in times of a global pandemic. Before I begin my remarks, I extend my warm wishes to President Ramaphosa on his birthday.

Excellencies,

The theme of this year's summit - 'BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth' is not only relevant, but also far-sighted. Significant geo-strategic changes are taking place all over the world, which will continue to impact the stability, security and growth, and BRICS will play a important role in all these three areas.

Excellencies,

This year, on the 75th anniversary of the Second World War, we pay tribute to the all the valiant soldiers whom we lost. More than 2.5 million brave Indian soldiers were active in this war on many fronts like Europe, Africa, and South East Asia. This year we are commemorating 75 years of the United Nations. India has been a strong supporter of multilateralism as UN's founding member. The Indian culture treats the whole world as one family, so it was natural for us to support an institution like UN. Our commitment to the values of the UN has remained undeterred - India has lost the most soldiers in UN peacekeeping operations. But today the multilateral system is facing a crisis. Both credibility and effectiveness of global governance institutions are being questioned. The main reason for this is that these did not change with time. These are still rooted in the thinking and reality of a world which was seen 75 years ago. India believes that reforms are a must in the UN Security Council. We expect support from our BRICS partners in this matter. Apart from the UN, many other international institutions are also not functioning according to current realities. Institutions like WTO, IMF, WHO must also reform.

Excellencies,

Terrorism is the biggest menace the world is facing today. We must ensure that the countries that support and help terrorists are also held to account, and this problem must be dealt in a united manner. We are happy that the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy has been finalized under the presidency of Russia. This is a notable achievement. And India will pursue this task further during its presidency.

Excellencies,

BRICS economies will play a prime role in the post-COVID global recovery. We have more than 42 % of the world's population, and our countries are among the driving engines of the global economy. There is ample scope for scaling up mutual trade between BRICS countries. Our mutual institutions and systems - such as BRICS Inter-Bank

Cooperation Mechanism, New Development Bank, Contingent Reserve Arrangement and Customs Cooperation - can also make our contribution effective in global recovery. In India, we have started a comprehensive reform process under the 'Self-reliant India' campaign. The campaign is rooted in the theme that a self-reliant and resilient India can be a Force Multiplier for the post-COVID economy. And can contribute strongly to global value chains. We proved this during COVID, when we were able to deliver essential medicines to more than 150 countries due to the capability of the Indian pharma industry. As I have said earlier, our vaccine production and logistics capacities are going to benefit all of mankind. India and South Africa have proposed an exemption from the Intellectual Property agreements relating to the COVID-19 vaccine, treatment and investigation. We hope that other BRICS countries will support too. During its BRICS presidency, India will work toward boosting BRICS collaboration in digital health and traditional medicine. In this difficult year, many initiatives were taken to enhance people-to-people contact under the Russian presidency. Such as the BRICS Film Festival, and meetings of young scientists and young diplomats. I warmly congratulate President Putin for this.

Excellencies,

In 2021 BRICS will complete 15 years. Our 'sherpas' can make a report to evaluate the various decisions taken by us in the past years. During our presidency in 2021, we will try enhancing intra-BRICS cooperation by strengthening all the three pillars. We will endeavor to enhance intra-BRICS solidarity and develop a solid institutional framework for this purpose. I once again congratulate President Putin for all his efforts and conclude my remarks.

Thank you.