



**EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
IN THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

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**FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEY LAVROV'S OPENING REMARKS AT
THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BRICS MINISTERS OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS/INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

On 28th of April, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov took part in an extraordinary meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs via videoconference, and delivered opening remarks:

Good afternoon, colleagues,

I am glad to welcome you in good mood and decent health. Thank you for your prompt response to our initiative to convene an extraordinary meeting of the BRICS foreign ministers via videoconference to discuss the problems caused by the coronavirus. During the pandemic the videoconference format is the only possible way of maintaining the dynamics of our cooperation. But I am convinced that soon, when the situation permits, we will resume meeting in person. In any event, I will be happy to see you at the next full-scale Foreign Ministers Council meeting in the Russian Federation.

Today, we have agreed to analyse the impact of the crisis underway on the system of international relations. It is testing global political institutions, economic patterns, international agencies and nation states themselves. This is a complex situation, and one videoconference will not suffice to find answers to all questions. However, this is the right time to start such a dialogue in BRICS. Today, our priority

is dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. This is about protecting people's lives and health. The need to uphold multilateral principles and rely on international law in formulating solutions to current cross-border threats is a no less urgent challenge. We are convinced that it is very important today to announce the solidarity of the BRICS countries in support of the emerging democratic, multipolar international order based on mutual respect for the legitimate interests of all states, as well as all the norms and principles of the UN Charter. I believe that only by pooling our national efforts will we be able to effectively meet current challenges like this pandemic. I suggest that the BRICS countries closely coordinate their positions, including at international agencies, all the more so since there exist the required mechanisms and venues for this work, first of all, the UN and its agencies, the G20, the WHO and the WTO, to name a few.

We submit for your consideration several Russian initiatives aimed at more effectively responding to the challenges posed by the spread of the coronavirus. They concern not only safeguarding health but also financial, economic and social issues, labour markets, the welfare of the people and the goals of sustainable development. We hope we will start actively working together on these initiatives at the level of relevant departments of our five states.

Cooperation on countering infectious diseases has long been a priority for BRICS. As you remember, the final declaration of the 2015 BRICS summit in Ufa, Russia, contains instructions by the leaders to jointly work on managing the risk of outbreaks, including of new coronaviruses. Time has shown that we were on the right track. Today, we should look how our foreign ministries can help our states to develop practical cooperation between health ministries. Of course, the quarantine measures due to COVID-19 have adjusted the calendar of BRICS events in 2020. Some of these events that were scheduled for April and May were postponed but BRICS will continue its cooperation via videoconferences. We will tell you about the vision for our future work during the Russian chairmanship.