

# Joint Communiqué of the BRICS Health Ministers Meeting in Geneva

Geneva, 20 May 2019

We, the Ministers of Health/Heads of Delegation of the BRICS countries, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on 20 May 2019, on the occasion of the 72nd World Health Assembly,

1. **Noted** the progress made in the health sector since the 1st BRICS Health Ministers Meeting in 2011 and resolved to continue strengthening the role of the BRICS countries in the global health governance, promoting peoples' health and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, by 2030;

2. **Welcomed** the Declaration of Astana and the results of the Global Conference on Primary Health Care (PHC), held on 25-26 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan, and renewed our commitment to PHC as a cornerstone of a sustainable health system for universal health coverage and health-related SDGs;

3. **Highlighted** our full support to the outcomes of the 1st High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Ending Tuberculosis (TB), held on 26 September 2018, and reaffirmed the commitment of the BRICS countries to accelerate efforts towards the implementation of the TB-related targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as well as the targets of the World Health Organization (WHO) End TB Strategy and of the UNGA Political Declaration on TB, while acknowledging the WHO leadership in multisectoral engagement, policy guidance and technical support;

4. **Welcomed** the Political Declaration of the 3rd High Level Meeting of the UNGA on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) held on 27 September 2018, entitled: "Time to deliver: Accelerating our Response to Address NCDs for the Health and well-being of present and future generations";

5. **Acknowledged** the need to address issues of equity, affordability and sustainable access to medicines and the different capacities of Member States in the context of Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), a serious global public health issue and called on all countries to recognize AMR as a development issue.

6. **Reaffirmed** our commitment to ensure the success of the High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), to be held on 23 September 2019, and acknowledged that universal health coverage implies that all people have access, without discrimination, to nationally determined sets of the needed promotive, preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative health services and safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, while ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the users to financial hardship with a special emphasis on the poor and vulnerable segments of the population;

7. **Recognized** the need for a holistic approach to health care and well-being with synergies between Traditional and Complementary Systems of Medicine with modern system of medicine, as appropriate to national contexts;

8. **Acknowledged** the key role of WHO to coordinate international response to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies of international concern and the need of full compliance to the International Health Regulations (2005);
9. **Recognized** the importance of guaranteeing access to vaccines and of promoting immunization to protect the health of our populations;
10. **Reiterated** our support to the “Roadmap for Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Other Health Products, 2019-2023”;
11. **Agreed** to make consultations on the possibility of holding a meeting of BRICS health regulatory agencies, in order to develop a joint plan of action to support access to medicines and vaccines, within their responsibilities.
12. **Recalled** the importance of investing and collaboration in research and development (R&D), technology transfer and of promoting transparency in R&D costs, as well as in medicines’ price setting, and encouraged fostering innovation models that delink the cost of investment in R&D from the price and volume of sales, enabling equitable and affordable access to safe, effective and quality medicines, diagnostic tests, vaccines and other medical products including generics;
13. **Acknowledged** the potential of new and emerging technologies including digital technologies in achieving the goal of Universal Health Coverage and quality health care.
14. **Reaffirmed** our right to use, to the full, the flexibilities of the TRIPS Agreement, confirmed in the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, and agreed to protect their policy space against TRIPS plus provisions and other measures that impede or restrict such access;
15. **Recognized** the need to respond to the challenges imposed by the burden of rare diseases and its financial impact on health systems;
16. Taking into account the SDG 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, **recognized** that the collection, storage and distribution of human milk is essential for the reduction of infant mortality. In this context, we agreed to promote best practices in human milk banking (HMB), welcoming the proposal of Brazil to hold a workshop on HMB, on 26-30 August 2019, in Brasilia;
17. **Acknowledged** the need to increase national and international investments in prevention and control of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and to support integrated measures against NTDs and investments that improve the health and social well-being of affected populations. In this regard, **reaffirmed** our support to the establishment of the World Day of Chagas Disease, to be celebrated on 14 April;
18. **Welcomed** the results of the 4th Meeting of the BRICS Tuberculosis (TB) Research Network, held on 19 February 2019, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in which we fostered our dialogue in promoting research on TB medicines and diagnosis, contributing to the elimination of TB, in consonance with WHO End TB Strategy and encouraged the WHO to provide through its Global Tuberculosis Programme secretariat support for the operation of BRICS TB Research Network;
19. **Recognized** the centrality of WHO in advancing the global health agenda and **reaffirmed** the intergovernmental nature of WHO and the need to preserve WHO as the coordinating and leading authority in global health;

20. While acknowledging the important work undertaken by Director-General Tedros Adhanom as Head of WHO secretariat, **emphasize** that a more effective and transparent WHO is a matter of interest of all Member States, including the BRICS countries, and will only be achieved through an inclusive and balanced process where the intergovernmental nature of WHO is fully respected and reinforced, particularly in those areas with far-reaching and systemic implications;

21. **Congratulated** Brazil for chairing the Executive Board of WHO during 2018-2019;

22. **Agreed** to hold the 9th Meeting of Ministers of Health of BRICS, before the end of October 2019, in Brasilia, Brazil.

Geneva, 20 May 2019.