



6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting held, BRICS Joint Statement released

The Environment Ministers of the five BRICS countries participated in the 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting on July 30, 2020. The video conference was held under the Presidency of Russia.

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar represented India at the meeting along with the Ministers of the other BRICS nations- Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa. The Minister stated that India attaches great importance to the grouping.

He further highlighted that the aspiration of BRICS countries are similar and called for sharing of best practices among the BRICS nation towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

Significance

All BRICS nations agreed on the need to work as a group for the post 2020 Biodiversity framework. During the meeting, the participating nations also adopted BRICS Environment Ministers' Statement, which was welcomed by all countries. The statement was seen as action oriented and progressive statement that shows BRICS countries eagerness to both work mutually and fruitfully. The meeting was preceded by the BRICS Working Group meeting.

Environment Minister's Speech: Key Highlights

- ➔ The Environment Minister stressed upon the need to implement the various initiatives under the BRICS and for the speedy implementation of the BRICS agreement.
- ➔ He also offered that India's support in providing a platform where all the best practices in environmental management in BRICS countries could be showcased.
- ➔ He also elaborated on the efforts made by India in areas relating to sustainable urban management, tackling marine litter, air pollution and the cleaning of rivers.

Equity, Common but differentiated responsibilities

The Environment Minister noted that India believes that Equity, Common but differentiated responsibilities, finance and technology partnerships are key pillars for attaining global goals of climate change mitigation and adaptation. He also affirmed that India is working to fulfill its climate agreement as a part of the Paris Agreement.

The Minister highlighted that India launched Air Quality monitoring index in 10 cities in 2015 to control air pollution. The same has now been extended to 122 cities. He also informed that India had launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2019, the goal of which is to reduce particulate pollution by 20-30 percent relative to 2017 levels by 2024.

6th BRICS Joint Statement: Key Highlights

The BRICS Environment Ministers noted that Russia's BRICS chairmanship coincides with the 75th Commemoration of the end of World War II and the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations.

COVID-19 Pandemic

- ➔ All the BRICS nations acknowledged the difficult pandemic time and noted that the fact that the pandemic has reached all corners of the world is not only a reminder of our vulnerability but it is also a reminder for us to unite, support and help each other in the face of such a destructive power.
- ➔ The Ministers further expressed their concern that the impact of COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ➔ They noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened social vulnerabilities, resulting in job losses, especially in the informal sector that has been worst affected and requires adequate support.
- ➔ The BRICS Environment Ministers called for initiatives to improve the environment, promote the Circular Economy in the context of sustainable patterns of production and consumption to be included in national plans for economic recovery after COVID-19.
- ➔ They also noted that due to COVID-19, climate change negotiations have been delayed and that the 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) will now be held in November 2021.
- ➔ The Ministers also noted that the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) that was scheduled to take place in Kunming, China in October 2020 has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ➔ The BRICS Environment Ministers further acknowledged the importance of working together to adopt the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP15, including implementation of support mechanisms.

BRICS Environmentally Sound Technology (BEST) Platform

The BRICS Environment Ministers welcomed the establishment of BRICS Environmentally Sound Technology (BEST) Platform and observed that it is of fundamental importance that we

develop existing areas of development within the BEST Platform, setting clear expectations in terms of the results we would like to see. The BEST Platform, which was set up virtually, could serve as an invaluable mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information views and sharing of the best practices on BRICS countries including post COVID-19 environment/sustainable development recovery programmes.

India to assume BRICS Presidency in 2021

India is scheduled to take over the BRICS Presidency in 2021. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar extended invitation to all the BRICS nations to participate in the BRICS environment meetings.