

Somerset West Ministerial Communiqué (May 11th, 2008)

SOMERSET WEST MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUÉ

INDIA – BRAZIL - SOUTH AFRICA (IBSA) DIALOGUE FORUM
11 MAY 2008

1. The Minister of External Affairs of India, H.E. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Celso Amorim, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, met in Somerset West, South Africa on 11 May 2008 for the Fifth Meeting of the Trilateral Commission of the IBSA Dialogue Forum.

2. The Ministers reaffirmed that IBSA provides a unique framework for trilateral coordination on international issues and cooperation in several sectoral areas whilst ensuring people-to-people interaction making the Forum a meaningful reality to the people of the three countries.

GLOBAL ISSUES

Global Governance

3. The Ministers reaffirmed their call to make the structures of global governance more democratic, representative and legitimate by increasing the participation of the South in their decision-making. In this regard, the Ministers reiterated that the international system cannot be reordered meaningfully without a comprehensive reform of the UN, and the Security Council, in permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Ministers reiterated that inter-governmental negotiations on the issue of Security Council reform must commence forthwith.

4. The Ministers also stressed the necessity to democratise international financial institutions, by enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries in the governance and administration of Bretton Woods Institutions. In this regard, they expressed concern at the slow rate of progress that has been achieved so far.
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

5. The Ministers stressed that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as part of global efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, require international support. In this regard, the Ministers called for an accelerated implementation of commitments undertaken by developed countries for increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA).

6. The Ministers also reiterated the importance of capacity building, equity and transparency in international economic relations for developing countries to achieve the MDGs, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. The Ministers underscored their agreement to work together to eradicate poverty and hunger and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all. In this regard, they welcomed the commitment by the government of India during the Africa-India Forum Summit in April 2008 to extend Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme to all Least Developed Countries and recalled the similar Brazilian commitment made during the 12th UNCTAD held in Ghana.

International Trade

7. The Ministers agreed that the developing and the least developed countries look for a balanced and development oriented outcome in the areas of agriculture, Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Services and Rules negotiations in the WTO Doha Development Round. They noted that the Doha Round of trade negotiations had entered a critical stage. While emphasising that agriculture remained at the core of negotiations, the Ministers called on the developed countries for substantial and effective reduction in overall trade distorting support (OTDS); proportionality in tariff reductions; adequate number of self designated Special Products (SPs); simple and effective special

safeguard mechanism and disciplines on export subsidies. On Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations, the Ministers emphasised that the principle of less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments must be adhered to and flexibilities must be appropriate and adequate to address the domestic sensitivities of developing and least developed countries.

8. The Ministers also emphasised the commitment to implement the directives of the Heads of States and Government on the envisaged India–MERCOSUR-SACU TTA as noted in the Tshwane Declaration, and urged for efforts towards achieving this goal. In this regard, the Ministers also welcomed the proposal for an India–MERCOSUR-SACU Trilateral Trade Ministers’ meeting on an agreed date in 2008 to promote high level exchange of ideas on this topic. The Ministers also took note with satisfaction of the progress made on the regional preferential trade agreements between SACU-MERCOSUR and India-MERCOSUR towards a Trilateral India–MERCOSUR-SACU arrangement.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

9. Recalling the agreement of the Tshwane Summit to establish an informal trilateral consultative mechanism to exchange information on IPR, the Ministers agreed to accelerate the development of this mechanism with the aim of consolidating a balanced international intellectual property regime. This will make a meaningful contribution to the economic and social progress of developing countries, ensuring access to knowledge, healthcare, and culture. The Ministers noted the efforts of the three countries to finalise the Memorandum of Association on IPR issues which is to be signed during the 3rd IBSA Summit in India.

Climate Change

10. The Ministers noted that climate change is a global challenge which has economic, environmental and social dimensions as reconfirmed by the 4th Assessment Report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which highlights that the risks of climate change are more severe, and could have disastrous impact on countries of the South. The Ministers further noted that an effective international response to this global challenge demands a coherent and an intensified global effort within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol.

11. The Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to the Bali Action Plan in developing and supporting clear, credible, and long-term multilateral commitments and actions in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, focusing on mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology. The Ministers stressed that in order for developing countries to contribute to the efforts to address climate change, the key enabling conditions are deployment, diffusion and transfer of technology for mitigation and adaptation, as well as investment in long term research and development.

Sustainable Development

12. The Ministers recommitted themselves to vigorously pursue the deepening of South-South cooperation for sustainable development. They reaffirmed their shared commitment to the eradication of poverty and hunger through sustained and inclusive economic growth in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner. They highlighted the importance of implementing the principles and goals adopted in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and emphasised that capacity building, finance, technology development and transfer and institution building are key to global sustainable development.

Human Settlement

13. The Ministers noted that as of 2008, half the world's population resided in

cities, and that by 2020 most of the world's largest cities would be situated in the South. With the number of slum dwellers already surpassing the one billion mark, this raises serious concerns over the urbanisation of poverty. In this context, the Ministers underlined the importance of cooperation among them through the Working Group on Human Settlement Development and an integrated approach to poverty alleviation.

Biodiversity Issues

14. Recognising the sovereign rights of States over their national resources, the Ministers highlighted the need to adopt an international regime to protect and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge. In this context, the Ministers urged the international community to make all efforts to conclude the negotiation process for such an international regime, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, by 2010.

Energy

15. Ministers noted with concern the increasing global crude oil prices and its impact on the economies of the developing countries, particularly the countries in the South. The Ministers called for the stabilisation of international crude oil prices and also urged countries to explore alternative sources of energy, such as biofuels. Biofuels development and exploitation should be done with due consideration of the environment, biodiversity and food security to ensure the social, economic and environmental benefits it can bring.

Human Rights

16. The Ministers agreed that the outcome of the Third United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, i.e. the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remains an instructive document prescribing measures, remedies and strategies in the struggle against racism. The Ministers noted the decision of the UN General Assembly to convene the Durban Review Conference in 2009, and looked forward to the outcome of this Conference which, among others, should be complementary to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and seek to foster its implementation. The Ministers congratulated the Government of Brazil on its decision to host the Regional Preparatory Conference for the Americas, whose outcome will contribute to the Durban Review Conference.

17. The Ministers emphasised the importance of eliminating politicisation, double standards and selectivity in the work of the Human Rights Council and in the advancement of the global human rights agenda. The Ministers also underlined the importance of maintaining the spirit of the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress being registered with respect to the institution building of the Human Rights Council. In this regard, the Ministers also noted the convening of the inaugural session of the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism.

18. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to protect and promote the universal human right to food.

Gender

19. The Ministers discussed the continuing global struggle for gender equality. In this context, they expressed concern over the neglect of the collective global commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Ministers called on the international community to revive its commitment, and to identify concrete and action-oriented steps to

advance the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly of 2005.

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

20. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and expressed concern over the lack of progress in realisation of that goal. The Ministers emphasised that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring continuous irreversible progress on both fronts, and reaffirmed, in this regard, that the objective of non-proliferation would be best served by systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner.
Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

21. The Ministers agreed to explore approaches to cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate IAEA safeguards. The Ministers further agreed that international civilian nuclear cooperation, under appropriate IAEA safeguards amongst countries committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, could be enhanced through acceptable forward-looking approaches, consistent with their respective national and international obligations.

Terrorism

22. The Ministers reaffirmed that terrorism is a serious threat to international peace and security. They strongly condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations. In this regard, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its relevant resolutions. They recalled the Outcome Document of 2005 World Summit that called upon the member states to finalise the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) during the 60th session of the General Assembly and stressed an early conclusion to negotiations leading to the adoption of the Convention.

Africa Union Diaspora Summit

23. The Ministers of India and Brazil congratulated South Africa for being chosen by the AU to host the forthcoming African Union Diaspora Summit in October 2008. The Ministers hailed the initiative as a necessary step towards uniting the people of African descent across the world.

REGIONAL ISSUES

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

24. The Ministers reiterated their firm commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the key African Union (AU) socioeconomic programme for Africa. In this regard, they acknowledged that infrastructural development was central to economic development on the Continent. Further cooperation should focus on the re-alignment of NEPAD identified priorities for infrastructural development relating to the areas of ICT, energy, water and sanitation and transport.

Sudan

25. The Ministers urged all parties involved in the conflict in Darfur to work towards peace, security and stability in the region. They also encouraged the UN and AU Special Envoys to continue with their efforts towards the peace talks in Darfur. In the same vein, the Ministers expressed their concern at the increasing violence in Darfur, particularly against civilians and humanitarian workers. They urged the government of Sudan and all armed groups to respect civilian life and ensure maximum access by humanitarian workers to the displaced. They called upon the international community to provide financial and material support for the deployment of

the UN-AU Hybrid Force and the alleviation of the humanitarian situation. The Ministers also called on the international community to honour its commitments made at the Oslo Donor Conference in Norway from 5-7 May 2008.

Western Sahara

26. The Ministers took note of the UN Security Council Resolution 1813 (2008) on the Western Sahara issue. They also took note of the request by the Secretary General of the United Nations in his report to the Security Council dated 14 April 2008, where he called upon donors to contribute generously to the assistance programme for Western Sahara refugees.

Zimbabwe

27. In view of the recent elections in Zimbabwe, the Ministers expressed confidence in the ability of the people of Zimbabwe to resolve the current challenges confronting their country. The Ministers also expressed their appreciation of South Africa's role in the mediation efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assist Zimbabwe find a solution to her current challenges.

Iraq

28. Noting that there could be no military solution to the challenges in Iraq, the Ministers emphasised the need for continued dialogue and reconciliatory efforts between all Iraqis. The Iraqi people can only achieve peace, security and development in Iraq themselves, with the strong support of the international community. The Ministers noted with concern the UNHCR's reports of several million displaced Iraqis and call on the international community to continue its efforts to assist those Iraqis in need.

Afghanistan

29. The Ministers expressed their concern at the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan due to continued terrorist attacks and resurgence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, growth in cross-border terrorism, their links with international terrorism, and the danger these developments posed to the task of Afghanistan's reconstruction and called for zero tolerance to terrorism. They reiterated, in this context, that a coherent and sustained international commitment was required to ensure security, rebuild effective government structures and promote social and economic development of the country. They welcomed Afghanistan joining SAARC as its eighth member in the 14th Summit held in Delhi in April 2007 and reiterated the development of a cooperative framework, especially for trans-connectivity in the region, which would boost Afghanistan's socioeconomic development and political stability.

Lebanon

30. The Ministers expressed their concern at the continued political impasse in Lebanon that has led to the delay in the election of a new President. While respecting the sovereignty of Lebanon, the Ministers supported the initiatives of the League of Arab States and its Secretary-General to assist in finding a solution to this Lebanese stalemate. The Ministers further called on all parties to abide by UN Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1701 and 1757 and stressed that an unbiased approach should be followed with all parties proven to be in violation of these Resolutions.

The Middle East Peace Process

31. The Ministers expressed their continuing support for the Annapolis Peace Process as well as the Arab Peace Initiative. The Ministers also expressed appreciation for the recent Yemeni initiative aimed at restoring Palestinian unity. Ministers also supported negotiations between the

relevant parties to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of other Arab territories, such as the Syrian Golan Heights.

IBSA FACILITY FOR ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY AND HUNGER

32. The Ministers noted that the review process of the IBSA Trust Fund was still underway and concurred with the recommendation of the Focal Points that the following actions should be taken to ensure that the Review is finalised prior to the 3rd IBSA Summit:

- The Focal Points/ representatives should meet with the UNDP Administration responsible for the IBSA Trust Fund at their earliest convenience, to discuss the modalities of the disbursement of the Fund, as well as the criteria for project proposals.
- The IBSA partners should prepare and present project proposals to the Board of Directors in line with the criteria agreed.
- During their meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in preparation of the 3rd IBSA Summit, the Ministers will discuss and finalise the IBSA Fund Review to be presented to them by the Focal Points in the next two months.

33. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress that has been made on the projects funded through the IBSA Facility Fund for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation in Guinea Bissau and Haiti. The Ministers underscored the importance of the IBSA Fund to assist other developing countries. In this regard, they emphasized the need to expedite the awarding of funds for the projects under consideration in Cape Verde, Laos People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Burundi, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Haiti.

34. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and to cooperate in the improvement to the social conditions in Palestine. The Ministers reiterated their full support to the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan, as expressed in the decision to donate US\$1 million per year, from the IBSA Fund, for three years, announced in the Paris Donors' Conference for the Palestinian State, on December 17th 2007. In this regard, they welcomed the project under consideration for the construction of a sports complex in Ramallah.

IBSA SECTORAL COOPERATION

35. Ministers welcomed the 1st IBSA Joint Naval Exercises that are taking place in South Africa's territorial waters during the time of the 5th IBSA Ministerial Meeting.

36. The Ministers noted the 1st meeting of IBSA Heads of Diplomatic Institutions that took place in Brazil in September 2007, to strengthen cooperation among the three countries. In this regard, the Ministers agreed that the next meeting of the Heads of the Diplomatic Institutions will take place in India before the 3rd IBSA Summit.

37. Noting that some sectoral working groups had been unable to meet, the Ministers urged their convening in September 2008 in India along with other working groups. In particular, the Ministers reiterated the need for the Ministers of Health and Defence to meet at an early date to expedite cooperation in these areas.

38. The Ministers reviewed the work of the sectoral working groups and adopted their reports. The Ministers reaffirmed the need for the Working Groups to meet regularly and to implement the agreed Plans of Action with time-bound deliverables. In pursuance of the above objectives, the Ministers noted as follows:

Education

39. The Ministers welcomed the offer by Brazil to convene the Third IBSA Academic Seminar, from 13 – 15 August 2008, in order to strengthen cooperation by fostering mobility of academics from Higher Education and Scientific Institutions of the three countries. The Ministers appreciated that

the three countries reconfirmed the setting aside of US\$50 000 each to operationalise the MoU. The Ministers also noted the Sectoral Working Group's proposal for the exchange of experiences in the area of training in sports as an instrument for social inclusion.

Public Administration

40. The Ministers noted the progress towards cooperation in the area of anticorruption. They noted with satisfaction the joint participation of the three countries at the CLAD seminar held in Santo Domingo, November 2007, with the presentation of trilateral research papers.

Human Settlement Development

41. The Ministers welcomed the proposed signing of a MoU at the 3rd IBSA Summit. They also welcomed the proposal for an IBSA Ministerial round table at the 4th Session of the World Urban Forum to be held in China, November 2008. They further noted the proposal by India to host an IBSA seminar on slum upgrading and inclusion of the poor, financing strategies, land tenure, and basic services to the poor.

Agriculture

42. The Ministers noted progress made in the articulation of the projects by the various sub-groups of the joint working group on agriculture and the urgency placed in convening training and workshops in all the three countries on various aspects; including genetic improvement of cattle, integrated fruit production and phytosanitary certification; cotton, vineyard and soybean production and value addition, among others; and tools and techniques for scenario building to advance the collaborative study on "The future of Agriculture in India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) with special reference to smallholder farmers." Trade & Investment

43. The Ministers reiterated the commitment to increase the intra-IBSA trade turnover to US\$15 billion by 2010 and noted that the efforts to intensify cooperation in the area of trade facilitation as well as the ongoing work by the IBSA Business organisations to disseminate the information regarding the commercial environment and opportunities in their respective IBSA countries are of immense importance in this regard. The Ministers also noted the efforts being made by IBSA countries to upgrade their cooperation activities for exchange of experience, expertise and technical assistance in the vital areas of SMEs.

Energy

44. The Ministers noted that the working group on energy met to discuss the joint programs on energy sector collaboration, and the implementation of MoUs on Biofuels and Wind Energy. The working group also discussed the finalisation of the task team on biofuels before the end of June 2008. The Inaugural meeting of the task team and a workshop are scheduled to take place in September 2008, in India. The Ministers recognised that work is being done regarding biofuels and food security. They noted that biofuels production should be sustainable so as not to impact the production of food crops or biodiversity. They also noted with concern the current debate on fuel vs food security.

Transport

45. The Ministers recognised the critical importance of transport in promoting trade, investment and people to people contact between the IBSA countries. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the deliberations of the working group towards finalising a Five Year Action Plan. The Ministers noted that the Action Plan specifies concrete timeframes in a wide range of areas which involve relevant stakeholders including the private sector. The Ministers welcomed the proposal by South Africa to host a meeting of

civil aviation authorities and public and private operators of the three countries before the 3rd IBSA Summit to discuss ways and means of improving connectivity amongst IBSA countries.

Culture

46. The Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Brazilian Government for having organised the 1st IBSA Music and Dance Festival, which took place in Bahia, in October, 2007, and congratulated the participants of the three countries for their performances. The Ministers underscored the importance of the work of the Joint Implementing Committee in establishing a Program of Cultural Activities, within the framework of the MoU on Cultural Cooperation.

Science and Technology

47. The Ministers welcomed the two IBSA Nanotechnology workshops held in India and South Africa in April and November 2007, respectively. In this context the Ministers were pleased with the identification of new areas for collaboration in the following fields: sensors, solar cells, catalysis, malaria and TB diagnosis and water treatment.

48. Also in March 2008, a consortium of UCT, University of Pretoria and South African Weather Service (SAWS) scientists held an IBSA workshop to promote research collaborations between South African, Brazilian and Indian scientists in various fields of climate and ocean science. Climate change and oceanography are one of the five themes identified by the science and technology Ministers of the three countries as a priority for trilateral research funding.

49. Based on collaborative activities, a number of pre-proposals were received, assessed and funded by Brazil in all the six areas of cooperation. Collaboration in the six projects are in progress including four in Nanotechnology, one in Oceanography and one in Energy.

Information Society

50. The Ministers commended the progress made in translating the signed MoU into focused targets and modalities of implementing the plan of action which includes IBSA e-Readiness Report, Digital Awards, IBSA Website and an e-Government Standards seminar.

Revenue Administration

51. The Ministers appreciated the progress made in both direct taxes as well as in customs procedures to enhance cooperation. They noted that several areas in direct taxes pertaining to exchange of information, risk profiling and assessment, large tax payers unit, transfer pricing/international taxation, computerisation and capacity building were identified. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction that specific action on evolving common approach on customs procedures was identified. It was also agreed that a pilot project of data exchange between customs of the three countries will take place. The Ministers appreciated the initiative taken with regard to the launching of the Joint International Tax Shelter Information Centre (JITSIC) like mechanism on 'Exchange of Information' between the IBSA countries.

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE FORA

52. Recognising civil society's role in enhancing the importance and visibility of the Dialogue Forum in taking IBSA to the people, the Ministers were pleased that a civil society IBSA Local Governance Forum (LGF) was launched at a Conference organized by Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) in January 2008 in India where a Charter of IBSA-LGF was adopted.

Women's Forum

53. The Ministers reaffirmed the objective of the IBSA Women's Forum to contribute towards the transformation of women's lives in the three countries, thereby supporting their government's efforts to deepen South-South Cooperation and promote equitable and sustainable development within and among their countries.

54. The Ministers took note of the outcome of the Women's Forum, which met on the margins of the 5th Ministerial Meeting.

Business Forum

55. The Ministers took note of the outcome of the Business Forum, which met on the margins of the 5th Ministerial Meeting.

THIRD IBSA SUMMIT

56. The Ministers of Brazil and South Africa welcomed the offer of India to host the 3rd IBSA Summit in New Delhi on 15 October 2008.

57. The Ministers of India and Brazil expressed their deep gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa for successfully convening the 5th IBSA Ministerial Commission which represents a renewed commitment in the progressive development of IBSA.