

CHAIRS NOTES FOR SA SEND OFF TO RUSSIA

GREETINGS

- Fellow council members of the SABBC
- Ms Lerato Mataboge: DDG- Export at the DTIC
- Mr Ben Joubert: BRICS Sous-Sherpa
- Chairs of Working Groups
- All Secretariat members
- Members of the Working Groups
- Business Guests joining the SABBC Delegation to Russia

Sanibonani,

I trust you had a great celebratory week after the World Champions, Springbok have taken again another silverware- the Rugby Championship. What a “*bunch of winners*”. May we as a country repeat these wins in other areas like increase export Trade to and BRICS plus countries and welcome investors to our country from the BRICS nations. Now, we look forward for the Springboks to beat the Northern Hemisphere teams, as they head to their Autumn Internationals, to take on Scotland, England, and finishing against Wales.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM WG

On behalf of the South Africa Chapter of the BRICS Business Council (SABBC), I wish to extend warm greeting to this “*Team SA*” *send off to Russia briefing session*. At the outset, I wish would commend the work done by the various working groups in driving collaborations and partnership to deliver the milestones achieved to date. I have been advised and perused the draft Annual report - we are encouraged to note some of the key recommendations being made on various areas, these include:

- **Agribusiness: Towards food security through climate and environment-smart agriculture in BRICS countries: Best regional strategies.** *These include enhancing food security of BRICS countries considering applicable actions and goals discussed at COP28, developing climate change adaptation strategies for agriculture, and proposing guidelines for flagship BRICS international cooperation research projects on decarbonization technologies in agriculture.*

- **Skills Development, Applied Technology and Innovation:** *We are excited about the **BRICS Future Skills and continuation to construct the BRICS Future Skills Training Activities and Training Bases** in BRICS+ countries to establish a platform for BRICS+ future skills training, certification and best practices exchange within the BRICS+ countries, and to foster BRICS+ future skills talent development.*
- **Energy, Green Economy and Climate:** *In this regard, the working group continued to priorities it's 4 Pillars carried from 2023 and added 2 additional Initiatives namely:*
 - ✓ *Energy Skills Atlas,*
 - ✓ *Just Energy Transition Centre of Excellence*
 - ✓ *Energy Research Directory,*
 - ✓ *Clean Energy Fund,*
 - ✓ *Energy Cooperation Forum, Fairy Tales about Renewable Energy, and*
 - ✓ *Initiative on Development a Hub infrastructure for the Integration of the National Voluntary Carbon Markets*
- These pillars and initiatives continue to enhance mutual cooperation, growth and sustainable development amongst the BRICS nations in the energy, green economy and climate sectors, using targeted outcomes of energy security, universal access, transition, research technology and innovation.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON DURING THE RUSSIA MEETINGS

- As we prepare to attend the BRICS Business Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Russia. The SABBC wishes to draw your attention to the numerous opportunities available within the BRICS plus countries for SA businesses. The focus for you should be primarily on the need to deepen trade with the BRICS countries, which ultimately means promoting the South African industries, and when engaging with authorities, raising the export barriers that require their attention.
- We must focus on driving an upward trajectory in trade volumes and investments among BRICS Plus countries. The SABBC recognizes the challenges posed by tariff barriers, non-tariff measures, infrastructure and regulatory complexities which hinder the full potential of our trade and investment capabilities. We will continue to advocate for policies which can resolve these challenges at the government level and at the multilateral forums.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Russia's theme for 2024 is "Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security". Through our governments, we are working to participate in the global value chains to support fair trade businesses and drive better cooperation amongst our nations, leading to greater stability and security. Thus, we are asking you to form partnerships with like-minded businesses and leverage on your resources and expertise for greater impact to the trade and investments for the BRICS nations.
- As the WG representatives we must continue to advocate for the promotion of equitable development and enhance cooperation amongst our countries.

HIGHLIGHT KEY ISSUES PERTAINING THIS MEETING

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Today we have invited our key role players to share some important information with you in preparation for our mission to Russia later this month.
- Our colleagues from DIRCO will provide a broad overview of what is expected from Team SA when we travel under our flag.
- We have also invited the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition to share some of Government's strategic insights, thus ensuring the cohesion between business and government in our collective drive to accelerate trade.
- Brand SA continues to be one of our trusted and most valuable partners. Today Brand SA will share some of the key country messages that is crafted by our government for this important BRICS platform. These messages will filter across all of the various Tracks as we knit together our South Africa messaging. This provides us, as the business leg of the BRICS Alliance, with a script of the most fundamental communication lines as we engage with our counterparts.
- Dr Mtheza Mtyopo, our Head of Research and Content, has lifted some key nuggets of information from our recent research on Accelerating bilateral trade with the BRICS Plus. Mtheza will share a few slides with you to provide some key insights, that will enhance your conversations with peers from our partner nations.
- Our Secretariat has been hard at work ensuring that the visit will be seamless and organized. Earlier this week, a document was shared with you providing some practical information. I have asked Sharmayne to highlight some of the more pertinent matters that we need to be mindful off.



CLOSING

Finally,

- The global economic landscape is evolving with exciting opportunities for all BRICS Plus countries. The current landscape provides for an enhanced trade and investment opportunities with greater possibilities for economic partnership and bilateral agreements between the BRICS plus countries.
- We encourage you to read the highlights on the broad statistics and brief insights provided to you in an e-briefing book that will be shared with you following this meeting, (*the Road to Russia*) - this may help guide your preparations and understand the opportunities you engage with representatives of the BRIC plus countries in Russia. Most importantly, the brief insights are the supplement file to the work that each working group has done, which will be a fundamental guide of a South Africa position in each sector.
- Martin Feldstein, an American economist, once stated that "*The only way that we can reduce our financial dependence on the inflow of funds from the rest of the world is to reduce our trade deficit.*" This is so relevant for our country. As such, the SABBC believes strongly that our relationship with BRIC plus countries, should be one of the enablers in reducing trade deficit with the world.

On behalf of the SABBC, I wish you a successful stay in Russia.

I thank you.