

BRICS crucial to dealing with global food crisis

BRICS, - an alliance between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - is an important grouping to deal with the global food crisis, promote global economic recovery and play a crucial role in global initiatives for improved food security.



A smallholder farmer in China. Image: Wiki Images.

This is according to a joint declaration of the 3rd BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development, who met in Pretoria to adopt tangible measures to boost domestic agricultural productivity.

The ministers also welcomed discussions aimed at establishing the Basic Agricultural Information Exchange System. However, they noted that such a system should not be a duplication of the Agriculture Marketing Information System (AMIS), created under the G20 and administered by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

The gathering also reaffirmed its support for such a system as a platform for sharing information. Delegates called upon technical experts in their countries to continue to work together for the development of the system.

Addressing food insecurity

With regard to addressing food insecurity, the ministers noted that all efforts must be geared towards enhancing agricultural production and adaptability of agricultural systems to climate change, especially for smallholder farmers.

They also agreed to co-operate in research, development and the application of technologies which enable agriculture to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The agreement was extended to sharing information, policies and best practices to address common problems faced by BRICS countries in agricultural development.

The gathering noted that the volatility in the price and supply of food and other commodities as well as constrained financial resources has compounded food insecurity for developing countries.

The ministers said strengthening agricultural co-operation among BRICS countries was imperative to ensure global food security and agricultural development. This would help to achieve sustainable development, eradicate poverty and realise the UN MDGs.



A flowering coffee bush in Brazil. Image: Wiki Images

"(We) reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen areas of co-operation, namely, information exchange, food security, climate change, agricultural innovation and trade and investment, and gradually expand the co-operation and address the other challenges to food security.

"We also reaffirmed our commitment to assist other developing countries in enhancing agricultural productivity, paying particular attention to smallholder farmers, women and youth to improve world food security," read part of the joint declaration.

The minister responsible for agriculture also welcomed the establishment of the BRICS Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Technology Co-operation, which will combine their efforts in addressing major challenges in agriculture.

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