



SA to unite the African voice for the development of common Agri-Parks

Johannesburg, 13 June, Press release; The BRICS Business Council (BBC) has unpacked the key priorities of its Agribusiness Working Group (AWG), as well as the opportunities that lie through the activation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), both for Intra-Africa and BRICS-Africa trade prospects.

As Agriculture remains essential in boosting economic growth, inclusion, and job creation within BRICS countries, the AWG further accelerates this sector's growth, benefiting each member country's insights and services.

Speaking in a panel discussion at the 8TH FARA Agribusiness and Science Week (AASW) which concluded on Thursday 8 June in Durban, the Chair of the South African Chapter of the BBC, Busi Mabuza urged African markets to speak in a united voice in establishing partnerships with BRIC nations towards the development of common Africa Agri-Parks.

“With the enablement of the AfCFTA, and FARA, Africa is able to unlock opportunities through an integrated approach, where we are able to include not only intra-Africa trade but also foster BRIC - Africa commercial relationships,” said Mabuza.

The event, which saw academia, policymakers and agribusiness leaders, sought to sensitize industry players on the agro-industrial parks as an effective tool in the long-term economic transformation of the continent within the context of the AfCFTA.

South Africa together with its global counterparts of the BBC, have chartered a programme that, with the imminent BRICS annual meetings in August, will allow the continent to find ways to unlock best practices on agricultural sustainable development as well as ways to improve fertilizer availability which are critical to the industry. These are two of the five priorities highlighted by Mabuza.

The other three priorities include:

- Knowledge sharing on Agri-technology, where the expertise of China and Brazil will be particularly useful. India also announced a R2billion investment towards its Agro-Parks in 2022, which provides the opportunity for Africa to learn mechanisms to attract similar financial injections, particularly concessional finance.
- Trade and Investment is a pivotal area as there remains a significant need for the strengthening of mutually beneficial intra-BRICS trade. The AWG creates opportunities for business facilitation, sharing of information about export opportunities in each country and business-to-government communication to avert trade-related challenges.
- Agricultural finance focuses on the drive towards smart-climate-agriculture and the adoption of new farming methods (like the European Union’s Green Deal) will require innovative ways of financing. Knowledge sharing from experts within the BRICS formation will be key. South Africa as a global Chair, will share its experience through the programmes of sector business associations, the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa as well as the National Department of Agriculture.

Adding to this, Mabuza cited that “access to information, opportunities, capacity, skills development and markets, are some of the critical elements that should accompany finance which we intend to incorporate into our approach, as advised by business partners in the industry.”



BRICS now constitutes nearly a third of global GDP and boasts four of the top ten largest Agri-produce exporters in the world, which also develop superior Agri-technology and two of them being the fastest growing economies in the world, presents monumental opportunities for Africa's commercial growth to be leveraged.

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For all BRICS Business Council programme enquiries and media interview requests, contact:
Zikona Captain at: zikona@sabricsbusinesscouncil.co.za or Whatsapp @ +27717506866