

Meeting with BRICS Business Council members and New Development Bank management

Vladimir Putin and other BRICS leaders met with members of the BRICS Business Council and the management of the New Development Bank.

November 14, 2019 19:00 Brasilia

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in the Brazilian capital.

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President of Russia Vladimir Putin: President Bolsonaro, President Xi Jinping, President Ramaphosa, Prime Minister Modi,

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Meetings between the BRICS heads of state and governments and the Business Council have become a good tradition. They represent a useful format of direct communication between the leaders of the Five and the business community. I consider it quite logical that Brazil's chairmanship also invited the management of the New Development Bank, which was established five years ago within the BRICS framework and has successfully moved beyond the creation stage; the bank, which has been efficient in investment and lending, has become a key international financial institution.

We listened to the remarks of the bank's president, Mr Kamath, with great interest, and I think the work of the NDB, its executives, the entire management team and regional offices deserve good marks. I believe that my colleagues will agree that Mr Kamath has done a lot to make bank's operation what it currently is – successful.

It is important that the investment project portfolio of the New Development Bank continues to grow and has already exceeded \$12 billion, with seven of 44 approved projects being implemented in Russia. They include very important projects for us, such as building small hydroelectric power plants in northwest Russia, in Karelia; an oil refinery in Tobolsk, Siberia; projects to upgrade the water system and infrastructure in several Russian cities; and the development of the Russian court system (including building new court houses and introducing advanced information technologies in legal proceedings).

I would like to propose increasing the share of BRICS national currencies in project financing as my recommendation for the bank's further work. This would not only add weight to our currencies as an alternative for international payments in the global economy, but also help to avoid additional risks and expenses in mutual payments.

And, of course, we welcome the plans of the New Development Bank to attract ruble loans on the Russian financial market. This measure fully corresponds with the interests of Russian borrowers too, and the preparations for issuing the first ruble loan have already begun in cooperation with the Russian Finance Ministry and the Bank of Russia.

In this context, I would like to remind everyone that the Russian currency, the ruble, can easily be converted into any currency of the world. Given the stable macroeconomic situation in Russia, the ruble can serve as an additional means of payment between our countries and it fully meets all these requirements.

We also count on the fact that the New Development Bank will soon complete the approval of internal procedures to launch the technical support foundation aimed at helping entrepreneurs draft high-quality design documents when applying for a bank loan.

One more point. It seems worthwhile to increase the number of regional branches of the New Development Bank. I would like to note the successful experience of the African Regional Centre in Johannesburg. A bank's branch in Latin America has been launched in Brazil. We plan to complete the necessary procedures for the opening of the Bank's Moscow office in the first half of 2020.

I would also like to praise the work of the BRICS Business Council that was described to us in detail by its Chairman Jackson Schneider. The Council really helps fill BRICS economic

cooperation with specific projects and initiatives in trade, investment, industry, finances, science and technology.

Related Business Council working groups – on infrastructure, production, finances, energy and the green economy, personnel policy, agriculture, deregulation, regional aviation and the digital economy – have earned positive reputations.

I would like to thank the members of the Business Council for yet another detailed report with recommendations on developing cooperation between states and the business community. We will of course study them attentively and will certainly consider them during the Russian Presidency of BRICS in 2020 when determining key areas of cooperation in our association.

I would like to mention that next year we plan to suggest to our BRICS partners an update, through a joint effort, of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership until 2025, which was adopted at its summit in Russia in 2015. We assume that the Business Council will come up with its own ideas and proposals on this.

As I said yesterday, a vast programme of business events will be timed to the BRICS summit in St Petersburg next July. We invite all interested business associations and official circles in the BRICS countries to attend. And naturally, we are looking forward to meeting our guests from BRICS at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum in June and the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok next September.

Thank you for your attention.

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