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MEDIA STATEMENT

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BRICS Health Experts commit to collaborate to end TB

Durban: The health scientists from BRICS countries committed themselves to the TB Research Network partnership and highlighted an urgent need to end TB epidemic and to collaborate towards the common goal to eliminate TB, the second leading infectious killer disease which remains a challenge for the five countries in achieving several of the SDG goals. BRICS countries collectively bear a significant portion of the global TB burden.

The TB researchers, programme managers and public health specialists of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa and the World Health Organization met in Durban, South Africa this week and recognized the importance of strong collaboration and innovation in tackling TB to address its substantial impact within their nations.

The delegates unanimously supported the targets and commitments of the 2023 United Nations High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on TB, especially on strengthening research capacity and collaboration through TB research platforms and networks; supporting the WHO TB Vaccine Accelerator Council and include the TB Vaccine within the existing BRICS vaccination group and increasing investments and mobilizing funding resources within BRICS countries and elsewhere for TB Research & Development.

The summit expressed with deep concern the issue of lack of new diagnostics, medicines and vaccines required to combat TB, but agreed on collaboration among member states in the areas of transfer of technology, information and sharing knowledge and experiences to improve surveillance, clinical care and advance patient centered innovations as part of the complete TB management cascade including social protection mechanisms.

The experts also agreed on strengthening transnational cooperation to finance, enable and conduct research needed to transition this economic bloc from being consumers to suppliers of affordable and accessible innovative tools required to fight the disease.

As part of the summit resolutions to accelerate TB response, the delegates recommended that the WHO Global Tuberculosis Program should consider convening a face-to-face meeting of the BRICS TB Research Network with the inclusion of the additional member states that are joining BRICS in 2024.

The delegates complimented SA for the successful hosting of the summit which marked the end of South Africa`s tenure as Chair of BRICS. The delegates also expressed a positive outlook for the Russian Federation which takes over BRICS Chairmanship in 2024.

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