

First international conference
“Regional cooperation within BRICS: sustainable nature management –
environment, education, tourism”
SUMMARY STATEMENT

On September 14-15, 2023 Karelian Research Centre RAS supported by the National Committee on BRICS Research organized the first international conference “Regional cooperation within BRICS: sustainable nature management – environment, education, tourism” in Petrozavodsk, Russia. The conference participants included representatives of the Federation Council of the RF Federal Assembly, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, Ministry of Science and Higher Education Russia, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Russia, Government of the Republic of Karelia, research centers, higher educational institutions, business community, protected areas, non-governmental organizations. The conference gathered over 100 persons, including 18 non-Russian participants representing Brazil, India, China, South Africa, and Belarus. Forty presentations were delivered during the plenary and two thematic sessions - “Climate change, sustainable use of natural resources, and environmental safety in BRICS countries: region-specific features” and “Environmental education and tourism in BRICS countries”. The program included also a virtual poster session. The book of abstracts was prepared in electronic format.

The Conference participants welcome the decision to expand BRICS starting January 1, 2024 and affirm willingness to cooperate with representatives of scientific, educational and innovational organizations of Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE in the field of sustainable nature management, climate change research, biodiversity conservation and development of green economy.

Considering the great potential of regional scientific centers and seeking to promote horizontal scientific ties between the BRICS countries, the conference participants express their interest in developing the following areas of cooperation:

- conservation of biological (including marine) diversity and monitoring of climate change. Some of the topical issues in this regard are research and development of conservation technologies, development of protected areas, combating illegal trade in wildlife;
- water monitoring and protection, conservation of water resources;
- application of green and low-carbon technologies, investigation of the natural sources of greenhouse gases and their climate regulating function, facilitating the design and implementation of technologies and practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere;
- transition to a green economy, which implies enhancing well-being and social justice while reducing environmental risks and conserving natural resources;
- forging common approaches in integrated management of activities in seas and inland waters, as well as in sound use of aquatic biological resources;
- development of agriculture and agrarian territories, ensuring the food security of the BRICS countries and the world as a whole;
- development of the tourism industry and augmentation of mutual tourist flows within the BRICS, increasing the share of ecotourism;
- raising the awareness of BRICS citizens of the risks and threats posed by climate change;
- preparation and implementation of joint projects within the framework of scientific, educational and innovative cooperation between BRICS member countries through the Russian Science Foundation, Russian Foundation for Basic Research and other Russian and foreign organizations, with a focus on sustainable management of water resources;
- creating a system for sharing joint research results for the BRICS member countries, including through specialized print (virtual) outlets;
- using artificial intelligence and neural systems in research and database analysis and in modeling;

- promoting cooperation between research centers in the sphere of the World's Ocean economy (marine / blue economy); development of joint multilateral educational programs in this area using domestic expertise;
- implementation of innovative scientific and technical solutions and raising the efficiency of nuclear and radiation safety provisions in BRICS countries. Using for this purpose the experience of the ROSATOM Corporation in cooperating with CIS countries on the management of spent nuclear fuel, radioactive wastes and decommissioning of radiation-hazardous facilities;
- intensification of research on the synthesis of new environment-friendly materials and the search for green energy sources;
- promoting research in the areas of material science such as the utilization of natural sources to value-added materials, utilization of waste materials to value-added materials, as well as utilization of natural carbonaceous raw materials to create novel green materials and non-waste technologies for their processing;
- improving access to BRICS programs for young scientists to enable them to jointly tackle scientific problems, share experience and develop new project initiatives.

The conference participants have proposed the following:

- to make arrangements for a conference on the Green Agenda and on economic cooperation between BRICS countries to be organized on a regular basis, and to recommend that the Karelian Research Centre RAS acts as its permanent host;
- to recommend that the Karelian Research Centre RAS initiates the inclusion of the second conference in Petrozavodsk in the calendar of events under Russia's BRICS Chairmanship in 2024;
- recommend that the Karelian Research Centre RAS initiates the inclusion of a BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting in Petrozavodsk in the calendar of events under Russia's BRICS Chairmanship in 2024;

- to support the proposal of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia and the Russian Geographical Society to establish the BRICS Geographer's Day in 2024;
- to support the initiative of the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education regarding the participation of partners, including young scientists, from BRICS countries in international overland and marine expeditions, such as along the Northern Sea Route;
- to recommend the Karelian Research Centre RAS to come up with the initiative and submit the proposal to the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education expressing willingness to organize an expedition using its research vessels on lakes Ladoga and Onego, as well as on the White Sea;
- to set up a regional Working Group within the BRICS framework to collaborate on the BRICS Green Agenda.