

Energy Research Platform Takes Central Stage Under Russia's BRICS Chairmanship

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After the Ufa declaration in 2015, BRICS, an association of five major emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has made energy cooperation one of its priorities besides attaining an admirable significant influence on regional affairs and very active on the global stage.

That 7th summit held in July in the Russian provincial city of Ufa in Bashkortostan, under Russia's initiative the BRICS have adopted the key guideline for expanding among many other spheres, development of energy cooperation, bridging the scientific and technological gap, as well as finding solutions to the challenges in the energy sector among the members.

The Ufa Declaration (point 69) states

"Recognizing the importance of monitoring global trends in the energy sector, including making forecasts regarding energy consumption, providing recommendations for the development of energy markets in order to ensure energy security and economic development, we call on our relevant agencies to consider the possibilities of energy cooperation within BRICS."

"Taking into consideration the role of the energy sector in ensuring the sustainable economic development of the BRICS countries, we welcome balancing the interests of consumers, producers and transit countries of energy resources, creating the conditions for sustainable and predictable development of the energy markets," it further stated.

Worth to remind here that it was Russia's proposal to hold the first meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Energy during the fourth quarter of 2015. While reaffirming the importance and necessity of advancing international cooperation in the field of energy saving, energy efficiency and developing energy efficient technologies, the BRICS look forward to developing intra-BRICS cooperation in this area, as well as the establishment of the relevant platform.

In 2020, Russia holds the rotating chair of BRICS. BRICS has neither a secretariat nor a charter. The country that chairs BRICS organizes the group's summit and coordinates its current activities. Russia has been holding series of conferences focusing on different directions. In mid-October, the BRICS Energy Ministers held their meeting and approved a roadmap for cooperation in energy sphere that runs until 2025. Due to coronavirus pandemic, it was video conference chaired by Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak.

The influence of BRICS nations on the international arena is increasing due to the increasing economic power of the participating states, and it is imperative for them to coordinate their

positions in energy cooperation, Minister Novak said during the meeting.

“Today, the BRICS nations represent nearly one fourth of global GDP and over a third of global consumption and production of energy. In this regard, it is very important to coordinate the positions of our nations where we have common interests and speak from a unified position in global platforms which concern themselves with matters of international energy cooperation,” he said.

“We have already begun to implement this idea in practice. Our nations have launched informal consultations on the sidelines of the G20 and on the sidelines of the World Energy Council. Beginning our work this year, we have collectively determined three key vectors of the energy dialogue. These are the support for the development of the national energy systems of BRICS nations, technological cooperation and facilitation of improved terms for investment in energy, contributing to the stability of energy markets and increasing the role of BRICS in the global energy dialogue,” Novak emphasized.

The roadmap adopted at the end of the meeting is the first comprehensive document that sets out agreed plans for the development of the energy dialogue between the five countries. The meeting also issued a communique confirming the intention to strengthen their strategic partnership in the energy sector and the area of energy security, and noting the important role of all types of energy, including fossil fuels and nuclear power.

The ministers affirmed that energy transition should correspond to national conditions and each country should determine the optimal policy without being compelled to adopt models that do not fit BRICS countries, according to the Russian ministry statement.

On October 15, Moscow hosted the first Annual Meeting of the [BRICS Energy Research Platform](#), where analytical reports by the BRICS countries presented. That was followed by the largest youth energy event in BRICS. This year, delegations from all five countries comprised of representatives of Line Agencies responsible for the implementation of energy and youth policies as well as over 150 young scientists and experts from 40 leading universities and industrial organizations took part in the summit.

According to surveys conducted by the VTsIOM, Russian public opinion research centre, the number of families that have been taught to save energy has doubled over the past five years. That the BRICS countries are taking part in the #TogetherBrighter International Energy Saving Festival, as part of the BRICS Energy Week (October 16 – 20) was a landmark event of Russia’s BRICS Chairmanship.

Notably, the Energy Research Platform designed to encourage the research community’s involvement in the practical activities on drawing up energy resource plans. Two major events took place as part of the Energy Research Platform. The results submitted for consideration by the heads of state for effective industrial interaction and practical cooperation in developing and implementing new joint energy.

Based on national statistics and forecasts, leading BRICS experts have prepared the “BRICS Energy Report” – a review of the energy sectors in the five countries, and the “BRICS Energy Technology Report” – focuses on the priorities of technological development of the fuel and energy sectors in BRICS. The reports came from leading experts, representatives of major research institutes and energy companies from the BRICS countries as well as international energy organizations, such as OPEC, GECEF, the World Energy Forum, the Clean Energy

Ministerial and the World Energy Council.

In September, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held an online meeting of the BRICS Foreign Ministers Council in Moscow. That was second of such meetings this year under Russia's chairmanship. The first one was dedicated exclusively to mobilizing efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus infection.

Within an updated Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership to 2025, Russia has drawn proposals on developing a new mechanism for the five member's interaction in securing sustainable economic development in the post-pandemic age.

The theme of the Meeting of the Leaders of BRICS countries is "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth" which is planned for November 17 via videoconference, to be coordinated and moderated in Moscow. This year the five countries have continued close strategic partnership on all the three major pillars: peace and security, economy and finance, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

"Despite the current global situation due to the spread of the coronavirus infection, the activities under the Russian BRICS Chairmanship in 2020 are carried out in a consistent manner. Since January 2020, more than 60 events have been organized, including via videoconferencing. The BRICS Summit will provide impetus for further strengthening cooperation together with our partners and ensure well-being of BRICS countries," - noted Anton Kobyakov, Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation, Executive Secretary of the Organizing Committee to Prepare and Support Russia's SCO Presidency in 2019 - 2020 and BRICS Chairmanship in 2020.

Since 2009, the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits, with Brazil having hosted the most recent [11th BRICS Summit](#) in November 2019. Russia is pushing forward significant issues of five-sided cooperation in the bloc's three areas of strategic partnership: policy and security, economy and finance, and cultural and educational cooperation. The five BRICS countries together represent over 3.1 billion people, or about 41 percent of the world population.

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Kester Kenn Klomegah, who writes frequently about Russia, Africa and BRICS, is a passionate contributor to Global Research.

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