



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER N. KIVIET SPEECH AT THE
BRICS SEMINAR ON GOVERNANCE
AND BRICS FORUM ON PEOPLE – TO-
PEOPLE EXCHANGES AT HILTON
HOTEL , SANDTON ON THE 19TH OF
AUGUST 2023 , AT 13H30**

Programme Director

President of the China International Communications Group

Leadership of the Academy for Contemporary China and World Studies

CEO of the Human Sciences Research Council

Principal of the National School of Government

Members of the diplomatic community

Partners from the BRICS countries

Directors-General, heads of state entities and senior public officials

Members of the academia

Members of the media

Esteemed guests, speakers and participants present here today

Good morning!

It is my greatest pleasure and singular honour to welcome you all to this BRICS Seminar on Governance and Cultural Exchange Forum under the theme “**Promoting Global Civilisational Initiative Towards Modernisation**” which could contribute to the achievement of accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism as per the theme of this year’s BRICS Summit under the Chairship of South Africa. The theme for this year’s BRICS Summit and the theme for this Seminar represents an objective and means towards desired aspirations for sustainable development and shared prosperity in the BRICS and beyond.

It represents an aspiration to build a just world order. It also represents the stage of our development and the need to abolish poverty. We are faced with the mammoth task of building mutually inclusive growth, pursue our own development path, have a say in the sustainability discourse and global governance through building inclusive multilateralism. This Seminar on Governance takes place at the time when the current system of global governance is in dire need for reform to be inclusive and discard the notion of universality into one that takes into account diversity and multiple realities.

The world has changed a lot and gets complex each day, and this necessitates evolution of governance. Governance cannot and should not be static. It must evolve in response to internal and external changes and most importantly evolve to meet our common aspirations. Those who do not evolve their governance run a risk of being left behind and have their legitimacy eroded. The system of global governance should be reformed to respond to multiple complexities without imposing uniform values to different realities in the era of poly-crisis. The system of global governance based on the myth of universality impedes the global South of self-determination.

The Global Civilizational Initiative which is at the centre of the theme for this Seminar seeks to dispel the universal myth of a one reality, one governance system, one civilisation, one way of knowing and one economic system into a world of multiple realities and encourages the co-existence of and cooperation among different civilisations in pursuit of common aspirations.

The Global Civilizational Initiative represents the respect for the diversity of civilizations, advocates for humanity's common aspirations such as peace, freedom, equality and development and encourages the strengthening of dialogue through people-to-people exchanges to foster mutual understanding.

The unreformed system of global governance and the conditions based international financial system make it difficult for the global South to realise their full development. The countries are forced to reform their national governance systems in favour of imported ones that do not take into account local realities and diversities. Governance systems that do not take into account local realities and diversities often disrupt peace and undermines development.

This Seminar takes place at the time when the United Nations points out that the goal to end global poverty by 2030 as agreed to by world leaders in 2015 remains bleak with the share of global poverty being in the global South. The global development agenda is dominated by disparities and inequities between the global South and global North. The global South has to contend with pursuing development and environment related goals whilst the north has already attained most of their development aspirations. Financing remains skewed and often comes in the form of loans with various conditions despite debt being an emotive issue for most of the global South.

As we engage in this Seminar, let us work together to continue with reforms in the following areas in pursuit of capable and strong institutions at all levels:

Strengthening Governance

The BRICS Countries must continue to work towards the reform of the international and domestic systems of governance that contribute to balanced and equitable development across the world in pursuit of shared prosperity for all. On strengthening governance capacity, President Xi Jinping teaches us that a country's governance system and capacity are the major barometers of its system and that system's governing efficiency.

The two are complementary. Accordingly, President Xi Jinping stresses that a country's historical heritage and cultural traditions, and its level of social and economic development determine the kind of governance system best suited for a country, and it is ultimately decided by that country's people. This is uncontested with the notion of disrupting universality in favour of the thriving and triumph of different civilisations working together towards the achievement of the common aspirations of humanity.

Reform of institutions

We need to continuously exchange as different civilizations on how we can build and increasingly strengthen our institutions to deliver the best services to the people on whose name we exist and from whom our legitimacy is derived. We need to build institutions that are resilient, dynamic and innovative. It is well acknowledged that efficient institutions are a necessary condition for driving and achieving successful socio-economic transformation. It is through this fact that the need to build strong, effective, and capable institutions as instruments for development and economic change is a central feature in most developmental states.

Successful developmental states have managed to uplift millions of people and have remained resilient in the face of crises and turbulences. That is, they are able to respond to internal and external changes and shocks and they are able to navigate complexity and turn crisis into opportunity. Successful developmental states prioritise socio-economic transformation and inclusive growth, focusing on the well-being of the people. They are sustained by the legitimacy of their programmes as well as the competence of public officials.

Strengthening Partnerships for Development

Partnerships are key to sharing resources and expertise to achieve common aspirations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has called for partnerships to end global poverty by the year 2030. However, narrow sectarian interests, financing and development disparities and competing priorities between the North and South have led to a competition for resources. These are threatening our prospects to develop. The BRICS, rooted in the appreciation of and respect for diversity is an important example for partnerships for development. We should continue to strengthen our cooperation to support the reform of institutions and build public sector capacity to lead successful socio-economic transformation.

The BRICS Mechanism represents a South-South partnership which appeals to most developing countries. As the UN reports that progress towards ending world poverty is bleak, the BRICS Mechanism should seek to intensify its cooperation in pursuit of sustainable development and the common aspirations of the global South. The BRICS Mechanism must continue to pursue governance reforms in the international system and at all levels to promote economic transformation, deepen inclusive and balanced development and promote more people-to-people cooperation to gather consensus on modernisation and build mutual trust.

People-to-people Exchanges

The people-to-people exchanges under the paradigm of the Global Civilisational Initiative should lead to beyond mutual understanding to share in innovation and contribute to the skills revolution to prepare young people for the jobs for the future and to narrow the skills and digital divide in the global South.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, we live in an era of diversity, complexity and uncertainty. These should not be viewed as a time of intense difficulty if we have agile and dynamic institutions. We should strive to continuously improve our governance and strengthen our cooperation to achieve mutual common interests.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and everlasting friendship.

Thank you.