

OVERVIEW OF THE FOURTH MEETING: BRICS WOMEN MINISTERIAL

Date: July 8–9, 2026

Location: Kochi, Kerala, India

Theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability (BRICS)"

Presidency: India

1. GENERAL CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

On July 8–9, 2026, the Women's Affairs Ministers of the BRICS member countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – gathered in Kochi, India, under the Indian presidency. The meeting continued the dialogue and cooperation to advance women-led development and the holistic development of women, aiming to achieve inclusive, just, sustainable, and prosperous societies within the BRICS framework.

The main objective of the meeting was to reaffirm existing national commitments within internationally agreed frameworks for gender equality, such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (especially SDG 5), in accordance with national priorities, legislation, and circumstances. The ministers also welcomed the World Leaders' Meeting on Women, held in China in 2025.

2. KEY CHALLENGES RECOGNIZED BY THE MINISTERS

The ministers acknowledged that women, especially those in vulnerable situations and in rural, remote, and hard-to-reach areas, continue to face significant barriers, such as:

- Exclusion and difficult access to formal and digital financial systems, limiting access to inclusive financial services.
- Persistent gender digital divide, restricting access to digital skills, information, opportunities, and meaningful digital inclusion.

- Disproportionate risks in digital environments, with women and girls facing specific vulnerabilities, including abuses amplified by the use of technology.
 - Barriers in accessing credit, markets, and business support for women entrepreneurs.
 - Disproportionate impacts of climate change and food insecurity on women and girls.
 - Challenges related to unpaid care work and the unequal division of domestic responsibilities, which limit women's full participation in economic and social life.
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3. WOMEN-CENTERED APPROACH

The ministers emphasized the vision of women-led development and holistic development of women, recognizing them as active leaders, decision-makers, and drivers of economic growth, social transformation, and sustainable development. They highlighted that this is a shared responsibility of the entire society.

They reaffirmed the importance of recognizing, reducing, and equitably sharing unpaid care and domestic work, as well as implementing policies to that end. They recognized families as the foundation of society and the role of the State in promoting social cohesion and enabling women's full participation.

The ministers affirmed that women's participation in governance, their financial and digital inclusion, capacity-building, access to skilling and entrepreneurship opportunities, and their crucial role in climate action, food security, and nutrition are interconnected and fundamental to sustainable development.

4. PRIORITY 1: WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP (A MORE RESILIENT BRICS)

The ministers recognized that the equal participation of women in governance and leadership, including in the workforce, contributes to more inclusive and effective decision-making. The following commitments and actions were highlighted:

- Women's representation: Recognition of the progress made by BRICS members in increasing women's representation in all areas of governance, public life, and the corporate sector, especially in leadership positions.
 - Policy measures: Encouragement to adopt, in accordance with national circumstances, policy measures to promote such representation.
 - Role in peacebuilding: Recognition of the vital role of women in peacebuilding processes, in line with the global Women, Peace and Security agenda.
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5. PRIORITY 2: FINANCIAL AND DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR WOMEN

The ministers expressed concern over the persistent barriers faced by women and committed to the following actions:

- Access to financial systems: Expanding women's access to formal financial systems, digital financial services, microfinance, and diversified financial instruments, including affordable credit, guarantees, entrepreneurship support for MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), and innovative financing mechanisms.
- Exchange of experiences: Encouraging the voluntary exchange of experiences on digital public infrastructure, affordable digital connectivity, and community-based financial inclusion models, to promote digital and financial capabilities, online safety, cybersecurity awareness, and multilingual accessibility of information.
- Investments in digital ecosystems: Encouraging investments in gender-responsive digital ecosystems that enable women's full participation.
- Prevention and response to digital abuses: Commitment to promoting digital inclusion and preventing and responding to all forms of abuse that occur or are amplified by the use of technology, through strengthened legal and policy frameworks, survivor-centered services, multisectoral coordination, community engagement, and investments in prevention.
- Systematic exchange: Encouraging the systematic exchange of best practices, innovative policies, and successful experiences among BRICS members.

- Priority of the Indian presidency: Support for the Indian presidency's priority of promoting women's digital capacity-building, including strengthening digital skills, AI literacy, and effective participation in the digital economy.
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6. PRIORITY 3: WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The ministers recognized that holistic skills development, targeted capacity-building initiatives, mentorship, and lifelong learning strengthen women's empowerment and economic agency and help mitigate poverty. Key commitments include:

- Care policies: Recognition that shared care responsibilities and comprehensive care policies are fundamental to advancing women's economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship. Encouragement to adopt care policies that enable women's full participation in economic life.
 - Empowerment of women in poverty and vulnerability: Recognition of the importance of advancing the economic empowerment of women in poverty and vulnerable situations, especially heads of households, who often face aggravated challenges.
 - Education and skilling systems: Support for inclusive, safe, accessible, and quality education systems, as well as holistic skills development systems (including STEM) and lifelong learning opportunities.
 - Strengthening women-led businesses: Promotion of strengthening women-led and women-owned businesses, including MSMEs, through improved access to markets, professional networks, finance, value chains, mentorship, business development services, and procurement opportunities.
 - Inclusive policies: Encouragement to develop inclusive policies that advance women's economic agency.
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7. PRIORITY 4: WOMEN IN CLIMATE ACTION, FOOD SECURITY, AND NUTRITION

The ministers recognized the important role of women in food production, nutrition, and

traditional knowledge, while noting that women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change and food insecurity. Key commitments include:

- Women's participation and leadership: Recognition of the importance of increasing women's participation, leadership, and agency in climate action, disaster risk reduction, and the green economy, including the promotion of clean energy solutions such as electric cooking.
- Gender-responsive and climate-resilient agricultural and food systems: Encouragement of gender-responsive and climate-resilient agricultural and food systems.
- Engagement with grassroots organizations: Promotion of engagement with grassroots women's organizations, including health organizations, to improve nutrition, health outcomes, and early childhood care and development, recognizing their unique knowledge, experience, and contributions.
- Women from rural, traditional, and indigenous communities: Recognition of the important role of women from rural areas and local, traditional, and indigenous communities as agents of resilience and custodians of traditional knowledge. Encouragement of their meaningful participation in policies and strategies for climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and food security.

8. WAY FORWARD AND INITIATIVES

The ministers appreciated the BRICS spirit of mutual respect, understanding, solidarity, openness, and strengthened collaboration, and noted that the Ministerial Focus on Women within BRICS provides a valuable platform for cooperation, knowledge exchange, capacity-building, and sharing of best practices. The following next steps were highlighted:

- Development of Guidelines: Agreement to develop the Guidelines for the BRICS Women's Digital Capacity-Building.
- Digital repository of best practices: Acknowledgement of the Indian presidency's initiative to create a voluntary, non-binding digital repository of best practices.
- Thanks and next steps: Expression of appreciation to the Government and people of India for hosting the meeting in Kochi. The ministers looked forward to the continued

deepening of cooperation on women's affairs within BRICS and extended their support to China for the BRICS presidency in 2027.

9. IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP, AND NEXT STEPS

Although the document does not detail a specific implementation mechanism such as the Agriculture Working Group (AWG) present in the other overview, it establishes:

- Commitment to continued dialogue: The meeting itself is a milestone of continuity, following previous meetings (established in 2023 under the South African presidency).
 - Cooperation platform: The Ministerial Focus on Women is recognized as a platform for cooperation, knowledge exchange, and sharing of best practices.
 - Concrete outputs: Tangible products were defined, such as the Guidelines for Digital Capacity-Building and the Digital Repository of Best Practices (an initiative of the Indian presidency), which will serve as tools for implementation and follow-up on the commitments made.
 - Next meeting: The ministers expressed support for China for the BRICS presidency in 2027, indicating the continuity of the process.
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Reference document: Joint statement of the fourth BRICS Women Ministerial Meeting (08th - 09th July 2026, Kochi, Kerala, Republic of India)

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