

Press Release  
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**For immediate Release**

## **“South Africa is open for business” Team SA prepares for 2020 BRICS Business Forum amid COVID-19 economic climate**

*Johannesburg, 19 October 2020.* The BRICS Business Forum meets in St Petersburg in Russia tomorrow [subs: 20 October].

Hosted by the Russian Chapter, under the theme *BRICS business partnership: common vision for sustainable inclusive development*, this year the forum will take place virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BRICS Business Forum works toward improving relations between businesses in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The forum is an annual platform that is generally held on the eve of the BRICS Summit, attended by senior business and government leaders, including the five Heads of States.

“The world is multi-polar and engagement between countries should be based on mutual co-operation. There should be close collaboration to establish effective dialogue mechanisms and the BRICS Business Forum aims to build on and expand on existing ties,” says Chairperson of BRICS Business Council, Busi Mabuza.

This year, the BRICS Business Forum precedes the 12<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit which is to be held virtually on 17 November. The summit is an international relations conference attended by heads of state of the five member states.

The 2020 edition of the Forum will span over four days (20, 22, 26, 28 October), with three sessions that will run concurrently per day for the first three days, and a plenary session on the last day. Attendance to the Forum is open to all through the [South African BRICS Business Council](#) website.

The South African chapter delegation, comprising 19 speakers, is being led by Busi Mabuza, Chair of the South African Chapter of the BRICS Business Council and consists of senior government and business leaders.

COVID-19 will feature strongly in discussions on how business is affected and solutions to accelerate economic recovery as well as the role of public-private partnerships in this context. So will the green and digital economies, global healthcare challenges, strengthening female entrepreneurship, food security and financial cooperation.

"The business forum is a significant precursor to the Summit itself and it will focus on business-to-business partnerships in the interests of creating tangible trade and investment opportunities. It is not just a talk shop. We are looking at achieving concrete, sustainable results," says Mabuza.

The main objectives of the nine [working groups](#), that function under the auspices of the BRICS Business Council, are to facilitate interaction and cooperation amongst the various business communities with a view to better understand market opportunities, build synergies, promote industrial development and create employment.

"As 40% of the world's population lives in the five BRICS countries which account for 30% of the global GDP, the Business Forum is a significant opportunity to market the South Africa brand so as to drive trade and tourism," says acting CEO of Brand South Africa, Thulisile Manzini.

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