



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

28 July 2023

Embargo: For Immediate Release

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES HOSTS THE BRICS MINISTERS OF COMMUNICATIONS' MEETING 2023

The Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Hon. Mondli Gungubele, is hosting the BRICS Ministers of Communications Meeting, which will be held at the **Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC)** from **31 July to 04 August 2023**.

South Africa assumed the chairship of BRICS on 1 January 2023, taking over from China. As a result, the country will, from 22 to 24 August 2023, host the 15TH BRICS Summit, which is an international relations conference of the five BRICS member states: Brazil, Russia India, China and the host country, South Africa.

As a precursor to the BRICS Summit, a number of BRICS meetings were scheduled to be convened in South Africa. Among these meetings, is the Ministers of Communications Meeting, which is hosted by the Minister of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

Previous Meetings of Communications Ministers asserted the significant role of digital technologies in areas of large-scale e-governance platforms, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, and harnessing data for development as well as increasing the effectiveness of the BRICS countries' response to the challenges caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.

BRICS remains a strategic platform for South Africa's foreign policy objectives. In the Department, one of the key strategic objectives is to advance South Africa's National ICT interests in regional and international forums towards attaining partnerships for economic growth and development. It is for this reason that the hosting of this year's Meeting of Communications Ministers is so important.

Previous meetings also resolved to encourage wider access to digital platforms and technologies, and for affordable access by citizens of BRICS countries to information and communication. They further resolved to establish modalities and approaches to promote equitable and inclusive access to digital resources for all people, irrespective of where they live.

Among the expected areas of discussion in this year's meeting is **digital inclusion, expansion, and development of transformative technologies** as well as **internet governance and security**.

On digital inclusion, South Africa's view is that the country is not an island, and the country's membership of BRICS must serve to consolidate its relations with the rest of the continent. Therefore the Department wants to promote the rapid deployment and rollout of infrastructure, including promoting a connected Africa.

On expansion and development of transformative technologies, South Africa will push for all member states to benefit from the research and development of these technologies. The country wants to be a player in the development of these technologies and not to be a mere consumer of technologies developed elsewhere.

On Internet Governance and Cyber Security, the country's goal is to achieve cooperation among all BRICS countries for an open and secure internet.

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Issued by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies