

BRICS foreign ministers endorse UN Security Council, IMF reforms

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New York: The foreign ministers of BRICS countries endorsed United Nations Security Council reforms saying it was necessary to make it "more representative and efficient" putting China and Russia publicly on the side for reorganisation.

China had campaigned to derail the reform process earlier this month before the UN General Assembly endorsed a negotiating text that would allow the stalled process to move forward. Russia had also expressed its opposition to the reform process.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Ministers Sergey Lavrov of Russia, Wang Yi of China and Mauro Vieira attended the meeting here Tuesday, while South Africa was represented by a deputy foreign minister at the meeting here Tuesday.

India is to host the eighth BRICS summit and Swaraj informed them of the preparations for it.

In a statement after their meeting, they also called for reform of the International Monetary Fund, a process that has been blocked by the US Congress. The ministers "reiterated the urgency of unblocking the IMF reform as a measure to reform global economic governance consistent with the interests and needs of the developing countries," the statement said.

While discussing the state of the global economy, they expressed "full confidence in their economic prospects" and called for "decisive and effective actions to accelerate global growth."

The ministers urged the timely implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership, and the full functioning of the New Development Bank and its African Regional Centre.

The continuing conflicts around the world drew the concern of the ministers who warned that they could "undermine stability and security and provide fertile grounds for terrorist activities and cause migration waves."

They warned that extremist organisations controlling large parts of Iraq and Syria "pose a direct threat not only to all the countries of the Middle East, but to the whole international community" and called for firm, concerted counter-terrorism efforts under the auspices of the UN.

In this context, Swaraj urged the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, which India has been advocating since 1996. The measure has been languishing in the United Nations General Assembly as some nations wrangle over the definition of who is a terrorist.

Replying to a reporter's question, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said that neither Pakistan nor any other country or entity was specifically mentioned. The understanding was that "the international community should have a joint and coordinated response to international terrorist organisations and the international convention would promote that effort," he said.

On two issues, the Syrian conflict and the Ukraine crisis, the ministers backed the positions taken by Russia. The statement said that the only way to end the conflict in Ukraine "is through inclusive political dialogue" and called on all parties to comply with all provisions of the Minsk Agreements adopted in February 2015." The statement added, "They

urged the parties to observe the current ceasefire and make it sustainable."

They "stressed the need to continue support to the process of political settlement of the conflict in Syria on the basis of the Geneva communiqué of June 30, 2012," the statement said.

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