

CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE ON NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRICS-RELATED RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

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In 2020, Russia held the chairmanship of BRICS, the association of five major countries that are home to almost half of humanity, that produce about one-third of the world's gross domestic product and that increasingly determine the global political agenda and balance of power. The BRICS countries have successfully established strong partnerships between their governments and their business, scientific and public societies. Today, BRICS are working together to withstand a variety of threats and challenges, from terrorism and international financial crises to the Covid-19 pandemic and the unprecedented dangers it brings in its wake. The united and efficient efforts of all the BRICS countries have allowed the nations to consistently uphold the principles of political and diplomatic settlement of interstate disputes and conflicts, advocate building a fair and democratic system of international relations, and promote constructive dialogue and cooperation among all the members of the international community.¹

During Russia's chairmanship of BRICS, the priorities the five countries set for cooperation and development included:

- strengthening multilateral principles in global politics and promoting the shared interests of the BRICS bloc;
- promoting the central role of the United Nations in international relations;

¹ Introductory Note from the President of the Russian Federation, BRICS, edition dedicated to the year (2020) of the Russian Federation's presidency in the BRICS organization (Dec. 1, 2020), available at <https://eng.brics-russia2020.ru/images/134/25/1342528.pdf>.

- consolidating collective efforts to respond to global and regional threats and challenges;
- enhancing dialogue on issues relating to international development cooperation;
- developing cooperation in trade, economy and finance;
- promoting cooperation in the fields of energy, digital economy and innovation;
- cooperating and building networks in cultural and humanitarian fields;
- strengthening people-to-people contacts.

New perspectives and spheres of interaction and activities continue to open for the positions taken by BRICS in the global arena, including the potential of the New Development Bank, BRICS integrated national payment systems, the BRICS Women's Business Alliance, and BRICS tax, customs and antimonopoly line agencies.

The year 2020 was extraordinary and challenging for people across the globe. The world became more unpredictable. We continue to face turbulence in all spheres of our lives, which tests our resilience. The threats and challenges already alluded to, and particularly the global pandemic, have forced all countries to reevaluate and modify governing principles and legal rules.

In these circumstances, the legal research, funding and publishing landscapes are experiencing rapid and dramatic changes. Research journals and legal institutions in the BRICS countries have started playing more active and constructive roles. Researchers, think tank fellows, academia, judges and practicing lawyers in the BRICS countries must take up higher responsibility for formulating a new agenda and offering real solutions for people, for the citizens of the BRICS countries, for businesses and for public authorities.

At this juncture, it is appropriate for me as the new Editor-in-Chief of *BRICS Law Journal* to share some thoughts about my vision for the *Journal's* role in the rapidly changing historical and cultural setting and to discuss new opportunities for BRICS-related research and collaboration.

BRICS Law Journal was founded in 2014 on the initiative of the academic community in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The University of Tyumen became the *Journal's* publisher in 2016 with the objective of creating a forum for legal discussion and a channel for the dissemination of research findings on issues of importance to the BRICS countries. During its seven years of publication, *BRICS Law Journal* has become a recognized open forum for legal scholars, practitioners, decision makers and young career legal professionals to reflect on issues that are relevant to the BRICS countries and internationally significant. The *Journal* has been placed on the map of widely recognized law journals, resulting in its indexing by the international research databases HeinOnline, EBSCO, Scopus and Web of Science. The *Journal* has assembled an exceptional team of outstanding authors and reviewers, and attracted readers throughout the world. It has moved from a regional publishing project to a well-known platform for relevant comparative research and legal development, not only in and between the BRICS countries themselves, but also between BRICS and the wider world. The editorial team believe that such forums as *BRICS Law Journal*

can suggest effective, efficient and adequate tools for our countries to respond to global threats and challenges of every sort. The view of the *Journal* has been in the past and remains today an ever increasing recognition that BRICS bloc development and people-to-people ties are crucial means to that end.

With this new year of 2021, *BRICS Law Journal* has reached a new benchmark and enters a new stage of its development. Building upon its legacy and supported by a newly established team of Editorial Council and Editorial Board, the *Journal* is committed to strengthening its expertise and influence, and to growing into an internationally recognized journal with broader scope. Now, the *Journal* is calling for papers and research from diverse fields intersecting with law – political studies, history, anthropology, sociology, economics and others as well. The topical areas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- trade, economy and finance;
- tax, customs and antimonopoly;
- sustainable development, energy and alternative energy;
- digital economy and innovation;
- healthcare, including BRICS joint measures in fighting infectious and non-infectious diseases;
- agriculture and food security;
- prevention and elimination of the consequences of emergencies and natural disasters;
- cultural and educational cooperation;
- BRICS Network University activities;
- youth development and cooperation;
- public diplomacy formats.

These topics are applicable to BRICS development and cooperation, and they were prioritized during Russia's chairmanship of BRICS with the aspiration that the relevant studies, discussions and decisions would bring the BRICS countries to prosperity, sustainable development and world leadership. Joint effort and collaboration of BRICS researchers will increase academic excellence and expertise in our countries, and develop deeper understanding and better communication, not only within the BRICS countries, but also within the entire global community.

This, however, does not mean that *BRICS Law Journal* will radically change its philosophy and direction. The *Journal* will retain its legal core, but it will become more inviting for scholars and scholarly work from other relevant fields of study, as the editorial team believes in the importance of a truly comprehensive approach to BRICS research.

Let the new chapter of *BRICS Law Journal* begin then, and let us hope that it will serve for the benefit of the BRICS countries and their peoples.