

Business representatives hail BRICS cooperation as significant

By Guan Keqiang, Li Zhiwei, Xie Yahong, Hu Zexi, Liu Lingling from People's Daily

BRICS mechanism is of increasing importance as it can help businesses tackle their urgent challenges, business representatives from the members hailed, expressing their expectation towards a closer BRICS partnership.

United Manganese of Kalahari (UMK), one of the world's five largest manganese producers in terms of annual productivity, is one beneficiary of BRICS cooperation.

"I'm a Russian that now spends most of my days in South Africa, and I meet with my Chinese partners very often as China is the largest market of my company," said Victor Radko, CEO of the Russian-South African consortium.

He added that his company plans to increase its output by 50 percent within two years, and the increased production will mainly be sold to India.

The BRICS mechanism, according to Radko, is of great significance for transnational corporations since it can address their urgent concerns.

He explained that when shipping ores to Chinese market, his company usually spends 60 percent of the total costs on logistics as they have to depend on road transportation due to outdated railway system in South Africa.

The establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) allows the members to expand infrastructure investment and facilitate economic growth, the CEO pointed out, in a hope that the upgrade plan of South Africa's rail system, which has been on agenda, would be implemented as early as possible.

In a belief that BRICS mechanism is playing an increasingly important role, Radko called on the members to learn from the others, voice their opinions on behalf of emerging markets and beef up multilateral cooperation.

"China and India maintain a medium to high growth, while other member economies having their own characteristics as well," the CEO added.

Radko's viewpoint was agreed by Ivan Suchkov, chief operating officer at South African branch of Russia's state-owned Gazprombank, who believed that financing demand of each member saw a rise after the establishment of BRICS mechanism, providing the financial institutions a promising prospect.

Suchkov said in order to seek financial cooperation, his bank has set up offices in all BRICS members.

“BRICS mechanism offers our bank with more possibilities for development, and we hope to bolster our ties with BRICS partners,” he added.

Accounting for over 23% of world economy in 2017, BRICS members contributed over 50 percent to economic growth of whole globe, Thulani Gcabashe, chairman of Standard Bank of South Africa, applauded for the eye-catching development and great achievements yielded by BRICS cooperation over the past 10 years.

The Standard Bank of South Africa launched a cooperation with Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) under the BRICS framework, he said, adding that the “marriage” of the two has expanded the space of China-Africa financial collaboration.

After the Chinese lender purchased a 20percent stake in Standard Bank of South Africa in 2008, the two have financed over 35 projects in Africa, and leveraged an investment of over \$20 billion for the continent by the end of this March.

The increasingly closer financial cooperation between South Africa and China will release huge potential, the chairman told the People’s Daily, pointing out that the BRICS Leaders Xiamen Declaration released last September suggested the members to strengthen economic and trade cooperation, which will create more opportunities for BRICS financial cooperation.

Calling the African Regional Center of the NDB established in Johannesburg a year ago as the bank’s window in Africa, Gcabashe said that it well illustrates the great new vitality of financial cooperation among BRICS members.

Such financial collaboration will not only inject impetus into a broader development partnership, but also add energy to economic growth of the whole world, he added.

Pics:



BRICS Business Forum, which is part of the 10th BRICS Summit, raise the curtain in Johannesburg on July 25, 2018. (File photo)



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Young entrepreneurs from India, South Africa, Russia and other BRICS members learn start-up experience in Yiwu International Trade City, the primary wholesale market complex in Yiwu, east China's Zhejiang Province. (Photo: CFP)