The BRICS NDB:

Four principles to make the New Development Bank truly new

This week government delegations from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa convene at the BRICS Summit in Ufa, Russia, to launch the New Development Bank (NDB). We, the undersigned civil society groups and social movements, agree with the need for a new kind of development. The existing development model in force in many emerging and developing countries is one that favors export-oriented, commodity driven strategies and policies that are socially harmful, environmentally unsustainable and have led to greater inequalities between and within countries. If the New Development Bank is going to break with this history, it must commit itself to the following four principles:

1) **Promote development for all.**

Investment cannot bring development if it does not meet people’s needs. The NDB should support inclusive, accessible, participative development that is driven by communities, addresses poverty and inequality, removes barriers to access and opportunity, and respects human rights, local cultures, and the environment. It should promote transformational investment that moves beyond centralized, large-scale megaprojects, and instead focuses on social infrastructure that serves the most poor and disenfranchised populations, providing access to services, housing, education, and supporting local economies.

2) **Be transparent and democratic.**

An institution dedicated to the public interest must be accessible to the public. Therefore the NDB should ensure that its documentation, policy development, and operations are transparent, accessible, and participative so that those communities who will be most impacted by NDB activities have access to information and the ability to influence and shape development investments and decisions.

The NDB must build governance structures that are democratic, transparent, and representative and guarantee that providers and beneficiaries are treated equally and in a non-discriminatory way. Development is not solely the domain of governments, though governments are ultimately accountable for it. The NDB must provide formal avenues for other constituencies - including but not limited to trade unions, social movements, communities, and NGOs – to play a role in choosing, designing, implementing, and monitoring NDB projects.

3) **Set strong standards and make sure they’re followed.**
The NDB should adopt strong standards to ensure that local communities and the environment benefit, rather than are harmed by NDB-financed activities. NDB’s own policies and procedures should be informed by the highest internationally available standards on human rights and environmental protection, and as a minimum, should be consistent with international law. Where a host country’s domestic legislation differs from the NDB’s policies, the standard which provides the highest level of protection for communities and the environment should apply.

The NDB should also develop systems and mechanisms for greater accountability, including independent mechanisms that hold the NDB accountable, deliver remedy to communities if projects cause harm, and ensure that the institution is able to learn from its investments and continually improve. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights provide a good starting point with their Effectiveness Criteria for Non-Judicial Grievance Mechanisms.

4) Promote sustainable development.

Sustainable development is central to the NDB’s mandate. Given the reality of climate change and the dire impact it is having and will increasingly have on prospects for development, the NDB’s investments should promote environmentally sustainable, long-term solutions and resilience. This means respecting communities’ rights to their lands, resources and a clean environment, and breaking away from the model of polluting, resource-intensive, predatory extraction which has long been the reality in developing countries.

If the BRICS can help create an institution that lives up to the above principles, they will have done the cause of international cooperation a great service, true to the name “New Development Bank”. This is what we, the undersigned civil society groups and social movements, expect from the BRICS, and we are eager to collaborate to make the NDB a vehicle for a new development model.

Signed,

Conectas Direitos Humanos – Brazil
Friends of the Siberian Forests - Russia
Centre for Applied Legal Studies - South Africa
Ecoa - Ecologia e Ação - Brazil
Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS International) – India
OT Watch - Mongolia
Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD) - Nigeria
Jamaa Resource Initiatives - Kenya
ActionAid International
Rivers without Boundaries - Mongolia
Vasudha Foundation - India
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - USA and Switzerland
Global Network for Good Governance (GNGG) - Cameroon
Plataforma de Direitos Humanos – Dhesca - Brazil
Friends of the Earth US - USA
Foundation For The Conservation Of The Earth (FOCONE) - Nigeria
Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad - Colombia
Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos - Argentina
Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação Indígena (Iepé) - Brazil
Social Justice Connection - Canada
Coordinadora de Comunidades Afectadas por la Construcción de la Hidroeléctrica Chixoy (COCAHICH) - Guatemala
Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación - Mexico
Actions pour les Droits, l'Environnement et la Vie (ADEV) - Democratic Republic of the Congo
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation - South Africa
Peoples Front Against IFIs - India
Fórum da Amazônia Oriental (FAOR) - Brazil
Movimiento Ciudadano frente al Cambio Climático (MOCICC) - Peru
International Rivers– International
Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (FUNDEPS) - Argentina
Otros Mundos - Mexico
Haldia Dock Complex Contractor Shramik Union (HDCCSU) - India
Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) - Uganda
Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA) - Regional
Rede de Cooperação Amazônica (RCA) – Brazil
Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería (REMA) - Mexico
Lumière Synergie pour le Développement - Senegal
Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR) - Peru
Centro Terra Viva- Estudos e Advocacia Ambiental - Mozambique
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) - India
Inclusive Development International – USA
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales - Argentina
FIAN International – Brazil
Accountability Counsel – USA
JUSTICIA Asbl - Democratic Republic of the Congo
L’Association des Jeunes Filles pour la Promotion de L’Espace Francophone – Guinea – Conakry
Forest Peoples Programme – UK
Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) – Lebanon
International Accountability Project
Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute – South Africa
ONG HADASSA – Gabon
Institute for Economic Research on Innovation - South Africa
Amnesty International
Progressive Plantation Workers Union (PPWU) - India
Rede Brasileira Pela Integração dos Povos (REBRIP) - Brazil