

Agbiz Press Statement

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BRICS Agribusiness Working Group engages with dtic to discuss increased market access

Friday, 19 March 2021, the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz), together with government – represented by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) – and also industry role players such as Agri SA, the African Farmers' Association of South Africa (AFASA), the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) and National African Farmers' Union (NAFU), amongst others, met to discuss South Africa-BRICS agricultural trade matters.

South Africa views agriculture as one of the important sectors in its economic reconstruction and recovery plan; this entails the potential expansion of agricultural production which will be carried out through the master plans that are in the final stages of drafting. The expected increase in output will require export markets, as South Africa's agricultural sector is export-orientated.

Friday's meeting of the BRICS Agribusiness Working Group was held in the spirit of supporting South Africa's growth initiatives. Stakeholders expressed interest in increased market access in China and India for a range of products which include beef, horticultural products and wine.

South Africa remains a small player in the BRICS market, with BRICS countries accounting for less than 10% of South Africa's exports of \$10 billion. The key hindrance has largely been both tariff and non-tariff barriers. The BRICS Agribusiness Working Group advocates for preferential market access which will address the aforementioned challenges.

"We call on policymakers to continue working with private sector players in prioritising expansion of agricultural export markets, specifically engagement with India and China," said Dr John Purchase, chairperson of the working group. "These countries do not only comprise of growing populations but also growing income and change in consumer preference, which bodes well for the products South Africa produces for export."

"The BRICS Agribusiness Working Group looks forward to increased dialogue with government structures to reach these objectives," Dr Purchase said.

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