

Press Information Bureau

Government of India

India supports the efforts of the BRICS nations to further deepen the collaborations in Areas of Research, Innovation, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) For improved student learning outcomes and employability
Union Minister of State for HRD Dr Satya Pal Singh addressed the 6th meeting of BRICS Education Ministers at Cape Town, South Africa.

11th July 2018, New Delhi

Union Minister of State for HRD, Dr Satya Pal Singh attended the 6th meeting of BRICS Education Ministers at Cape Town, South Africa. Beside Dr Satya Pal Singh, Minister of Higher Education and Training of South Africa, Mrs GNM Pandor, Vice Minister, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China, Mr Zhiwen ZHU, State Secretary-Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Russian Federation, Mr Pavel Zenkovich and Head of International Affairs, Ministry of Education of Brazil, Mr Leonordo Cardoso also participated in the meeting.

In the opening remarks, Dr Satya Pal Singh said that Government of India supports the efforts of the BRICS nations to further deepen the collaborations in areas of Research, Innovation, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with special emphasis on promotion of workplace-based learning for improved student learning outcomes and employability. He highlighted the India's substantial progress in the areas of access of Higher Education and quality of education. Dr Singh mentioned that the Government of India considers 'Education' as a strategic priority, which relies on – Accessibility, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. He emphasized that we should not only focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) but also **Art of life**, importance of life and above all happy and satisfied life.

In this meeting of BRICS, India was allotted the key theme of '**Digitization in Education**'. Dr Satya Pal Singh showcased the significant strides which India has made in field of digitization of education to ensure access of education to anyone, anytime and anywhere. He said the '**Digital India**' initiative of the Government of India is at the fulcrum of the Digitization of Education. He said that to ensure the access and quality of education in a large country like India, Government of India has leveraged digital technology extensively. He apprised to all present about the India's initiatives like SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHA, National Digital Library, National Academic Depository, E-Yantra, Virtual Labs, Operation Digital Board, E- Pathshala, Diksha, and Geographic information System (GIS). The Education Minister of South Africa not only appreciated the significant achievements of India in the field of digitization.

At the end of the meeting, Dr Singh, in his concluding remark said that BRICS Education Ministers have successfully identified several focus areas for education, which is an appreciable achievement. However, there is a very important need to emphasize the importance of teaching our students the human values and ethical values. The World will be far peaceful and happier place if we inculcate human values in our students from their formative years till they complete higher education. Therefore, BRICS nations should make necessary changes in courses and syllabi to incorporate values and ethical practices in education. He also said that a concrete action plan is needed to translate agenda of BRICS into reality as that only will make impactful changes in lives of our people. Dr Singh advocated for introduction of scholarship/fellowship for the students of BRICS nation to facilitate them to carry academic and research activities in identified thematic areas. This will also lead to better collaboration among the faculty and students of BRICS nations.

The above suggestions of Dr Satya Pal Singh were appreciated by all BRICS participating Education Minister. It was unanimously decided that Declaration of 6th meeting of BRICS Education Minister should incorporate above suggestions proposed by India.

The meeting culminated by signing the Declaration of the 6th meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education, 2018. In the declaration Member States declared their commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all” that was set within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Framework for Action. Also to support an initiative by India to develop a proposal on digitisation to improve education and training, as well as policy in this area. This would include a comparative study of digital learning (e-learning) across schools, colleges and universities in BRICS Member States, with a view to, inter alia, learning and applying lessons from good practices.

The copy of Declaration can be seen on the link below.