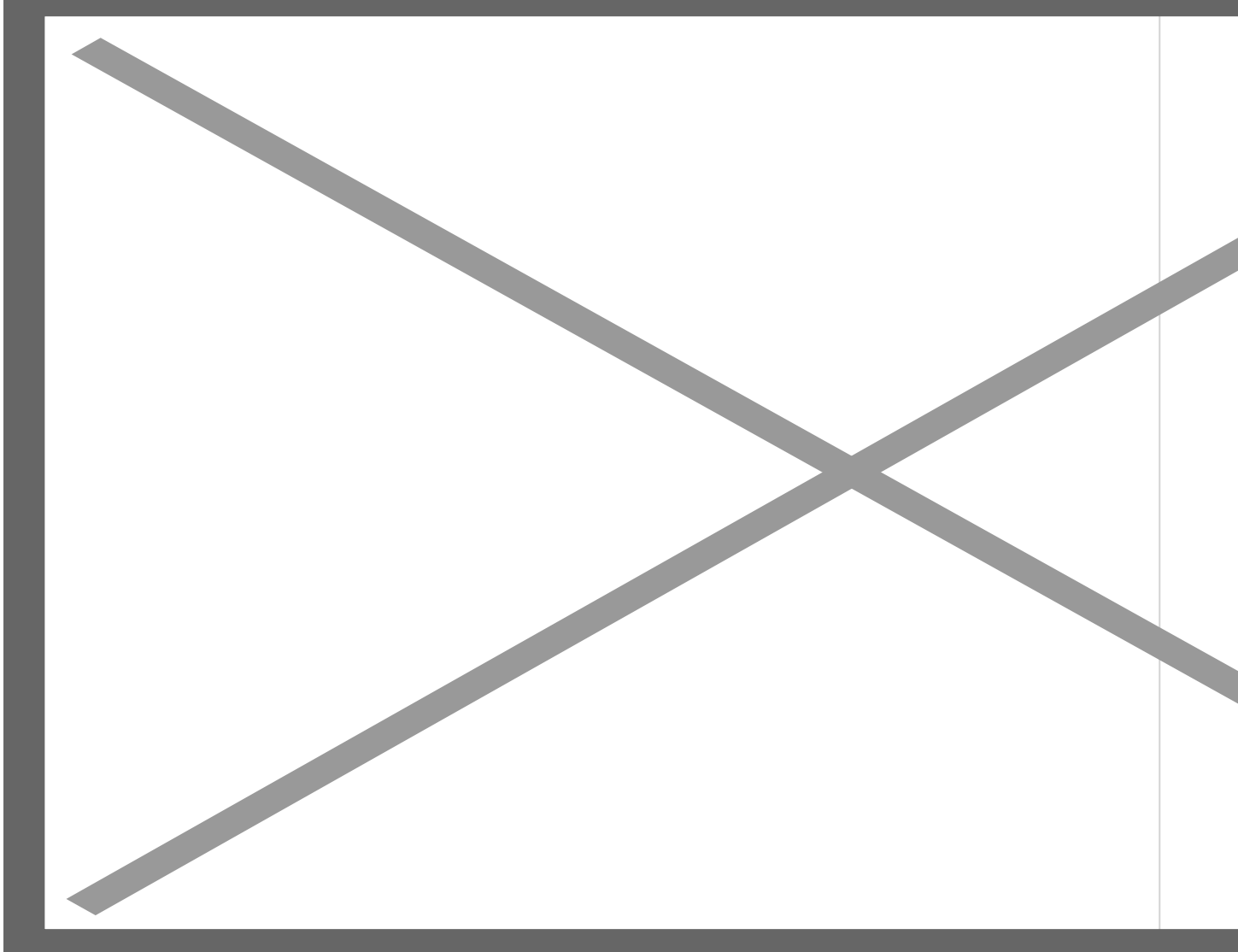


Russia and China welcome Venezuela's interest in joining BRICS

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Cape Town, June 1 (RHC)-- The Chinese government has applauded Venezuela's willingness to join the BRICS, an economic cooperation forum that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

"We welcome the prompt accession of as many supporting partners as possible to the great BRICS family," said Mao Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Russia also had a favorable view. "Venezuela's intention highlights the increasing prestige of the BRICS in the world," stated Alexander Schetin, the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry's representative for Latin America.

"Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's statement reflects the growing authority that the BRICS are acquiring in the current international situation, with their perspective on what is happening and their model of equal cooperation without any sanctions or pressures of any kind," Schetin pointed out.

South Africa reported that applications for joining the BRICS are received almost weekly. According to Anil Suklal, Ambassador-at-Large for Asia and BRICS at the South African Foreign Ministry, we are talking about 30 countries.

During a meeting with Brazilian President Lula da Silva held on May 29th, Maduro announced that Venezuela aspired to modestly become part of the BRICS in order to be part of the construction of the new global architecture and geopolitics.

Schetin mentioned that the BRICS are currently discussing criteria for the group's expansion. "When the corresponding agreements are adopted, concrete candidacies will be analyzed. As we understand, the president of Venezuela emphasized that his country was also on the list of candidates. We highly value this," he emphasized.

Currently, the BRICS represent over 20 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and 42 percent of the world's population.

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