

KABUL CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉ



A Renewed Commitment by the Afghan Government to the Afghan People A Renewed Commitment by the International Community to Afghanistan

PREAMBLE

1. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community (“Participants”) held a historic meeting today in Kabul to renew their commitment to the Afghan people. The Conference marked a new phase in their partnership, the *Kabul Process*, and a heightened commitment to a secure, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. Participants affirmed support for the Afghan Government’s leadership in exercising its sovereign authority. The Afghan Government’s programme is defined by measurable benchmarks contained in this document, as well as the detailed National Priority Programmes supported by the Conference that together represent the prioritized requirements of the Afghan National Development Strategy.
2. The hallmark of the Kabul Process, which began with President Hamid Karzai’s second inaugural speech in November 2009, is Afghan leadership and ownership. The consensus of the nation is being translated into a vision through a concrete programme of action for the renewal of the state. The Consultative Peace Jirga of June 2010 was an expression of national consensus and gave a mandate to adopt a “whole of the state” approach and “whole of government” path to national renewal. The essence of the “whole of the state” is constitutionalism: to strengthen each of the three branches of the government and to reinforce the constitutional checks and balances that guarantees and enforces citizen rights and obligations. The essence of the “whole of government” approach is structural reform to create an effective, accountable and transparent government that can deliver services to the population and safeguard national interests. Together, these complementary approaches, by putting people at the core, are key to stability and prosperity.
3. The Kabul Process is built upon deep and broad international partnerships. The United Nations mandate, expressed through the consensus of the General Assembly in 2001, and renewed through a series of Security Council resolutions, provides the international legitimacy and manifests the will of the international community to secure Afghanistan’s future. Our meeting in Kabul has been made possible by intense work that took place at the London Conference, and consultations with international partners since the London Conference. These events reaffirmed the commitment of the Afghan Government to improve security, governance and economic opportunity for its citizens. In addition, these events reaffirmed the international community’s commitment to support the transition to Afghan leadership and its intention to provide security and economic assistance to realise our shared objectives.

Participants affirmed their support for relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions upholding the security, prosperity and human rights of all Afghans and in particular the central role of the UN to support the Afghan Government's efforts in achieving these goals.

4. Given Afghanistan's location at the heart of Asia, its newly affirmed natural wealth, and the expanding Asian economy, Afghanistan is poised to become a centre of regional cooperation. Peace yields a much higher dividend than conflict. Participants invited Afghanistan's neighbors to join with urgency in a common quest for stability and prosperity to overcome the recent legacy of conflict and poverty.
5. In support of Afghanistan's vision of renewal and programmes to deliver concrete benefits to its citizens, the international community intends to realign its assistance to advance Afghanistan's priorities, reaffirming the commitments made at the London Conference to channel increasing international resources through the Afghan Government budget, and in greater alignment with Afghan priorities. The international community welcomes the Afghan Government's committed reforms outlined in its new National Priority Programmes, particularly those related to accountability and anti-corruption. Appreciating the role that international financial institutions have played in the management of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and their support for national programmes, Participants invited them to provide their support and expertise for the Afghan Government's programme of renewal.
6. The Kabul Process recognises that the Afghan Government can guarantee security only when its people are confident in its ability to deliver public services, good governance, human rights protection including gender equality, and economic opportunities. All parties recognise that the chance to deliver on these commitments has been earned through tragic losses, including civilian casualties, and the tremendous sacrifices of the Afghan and international armed forces currently engaged in the struggle for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Principles of Effective Partnership

7. To achieve success in Afghanistan, the partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community should be based on the leadership and ownership of the Afghan Government, underpinned by its unique and irreplaceable knowledge of its own culture and people. This partnership should include coherent support by the international community, lending its resources and technical knowledge to the implementation of Afghan-defined programmes. Participants acknowledged that aid delivered through the budget is among the most effective means of reducing dependence, delivering the shared governance, development and security outcomes that Afghans desire, and increasing the coherence of aid and Afghan Government capacity. As donor funds are increasingly transferred to the Afghan Government in line with increased confidence in Afghan public financial management, off-budget development assistance should also increasingly align with the prioritized Afghan National Development Strategy. The Government of Afghanistan recognizes the importance of established and successful bilateral development programmes and projects, which are in line with the Afghan development priorities and that fulfill the criteria for effective off-budget development finance and form crucial elements to meet Afghanistan's reconstruction and development needs.
8. To implement these principles of effective partnership, international Participants:
 - In line with the London Conference Communiqué, restated their strong support for channeling at least 50% of development aid through the Afghan Government's core budget within two years while, as committed at the London Conference, the Afghan Government achieves the necessary reforms to strengthen its public financial management systems, reduce corruption, improve budget execution, and increase revenue collection to finance key National Priority Programmes;

- Expressed their readiness to align progressively their development assistance behind the National Priority Programmes with the goal of achieving 80% of alignment within the next two years. Implementation and costing plans for these programmes are to be brought forward by the Afghan Government by October 2010. Participants committed to work with the Afghan Government to take the concrete steps necessary to address the current limited capacity for the transparent absorption of funds;
- Intend to begin work with the Afghan Government to practically implement the principles outlined in the 2010 “Operational Guide: Criteria for Effective Off-Budget Development Finance”;
- Intend to work with the Afghan Government to improve procurement procedures and due diligence in international contracting procedures within a year, and, unless a clear case for added value is made, endeavor to reduce sub-contracting and to take responsibility for the visibility and transparency of all necessary sub-contracting networks.

Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights

9. Good governance, the rule of law, and human rights form the foundation of the strategy to achieve a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Improvements in these areas should not only increase the confidence of the Afghan people in their own future, but also underpin security improvements and economic and social development. It is also crucial that the Government, in pursuing its reforms, continue to consult with the people through their representative bodies, civil society, and other mechanisms. Building on the London Conference commitments, the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of its international partners, pledged to:
 - Initiate within six months a strategy for long term electoral reform that addresses in particular the sustainability of the electoral process;
 - Improve access to the delivery of justice throughout Afghanistan by:
 - advancing a legislative reform agenda that includes enacting the draft Criminal Procedure Code in the next six months, preparing commentaries on the Civil and Penal Codes, and strengthening state policies and judicial capabilities to facilitate the return of illegally seized lands;
 - improving provision of legal aid services within the next 12 months;
 - aligning the national priority Law and Justice for All Programme with the National Justice Programme and the National Justice Sector Policy in the next twelve months, and committing to sequenced implementation of the reforms they require;
 - completing the informal justice strategy in alignment with the National Justice Sector Strategy to link it with the formal justice sector, and beginning implementation in the next twelve months.
 - Undertake all necessary measures to increase transparency and accountability and tackle corruption. The Afghan Government pledged to:
 - finalise by October 2010 the Framework of the Afghan Government's National Priority Programmes, including guidelines for clear goals, benchmarks and timelines;
 - establish, within twelve months, the statutory basis for the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) and the Anti-Corruption Tribunal (Special Courts);
 - submit an Audit Law within six months, meeting international standards, for external audits to ensure the strengthening and the independence of the Control and Audit

- office, and to authorise the Ministry of Finance to carry out internal audits across government;
- establish a legal review committee within six months to review Afghan laws for compliance with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which the Government of Afghanistan has already signed into law and ratified. Laws found to be inconsistent are to be prioritized for revision;
 - adopt policies governing bulk cash transfer, including regulations or laws that are needed, and begin their implementation over the next twelve months;
 - establish the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee with a permanent secretariat, to be fully operational in three months.
- Verify and publish the asset declarations of all senior officials required by the law, and update and publish these declarations on an annual basis, starting in 2010;
 - Increase its efficiency and effectiveness by continuing to implement broad-based policy, legal, and structural reform in public administration. Over the next six months, the appointment procedures for senior civil servants are to be simplified and made transparent, merit-based procedures are to be introduced and salary reform accelerated;
 - Strengthen civil service reform by enhancing complementarity between the Afghan Civilian Technical Assistance Programme (CTAP) and the Management Capacity Programme (MCP) in twelve months;
 - Seek an understanding with donors, over the next six months, on a harmonized salary scale for donor-funded salaries of persons working within the Afghan Government;
 - Introduce and implement a standardized methodology to assess public financial management of line ministries, and, within six months, design with donor support, capacity development programmes to fulfill assessment recommendations;
 - Implement over the next twelve months, in a phased and fiscally sustainable manner, the Sub-National Governance Policy, and strengthen local institutional capacity, including training of civil servants and development of training curricula, and develop sub-national regulatory, financing, and budgetary frameworks;
 - Improve capacity in the judicial system through the design and implementation of a comprehensive human resources strategy that strengthens accountability mechanisms and provides adequate benefits for judicial employees within 12 months;
 - In cooperation with civil society and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), finalize and begin the implementation of the National Priority Programme for Human Rights and Civic Responsibilities, and undertake human rights, legal awareness and civic education programmes targeting communities across Afghanistan to foster a more informed public and civil society, and to increase Government accountability;
 - Strive to ensure the necessary political and financial support for the AIHRC while guaranteeing its constitutional status, and initiate discussions with the AIHRC within six months to explore its budgetary status.

Gender and Children's Rights

10. Participants reiterated the centrality of women's rights, including political, economic and social equality, to the future of Afghanistan, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Participants commended the mainstreaming of gender into all priority programmes and reiterated their commitment to assist all national ministries and sub-national government bodies in implementing their respective responsibilities under the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), and to ensure that all training and civic education programmes contribute to concrete advancements in its implementation. In addition, the Government of Afghanistan, over the next six months, is to identify and prioritize NAPWA benchmarks for implementation within each cluster; and develop a strategy to implement the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW), including services for victims. Participants committed to respect and prioritise the fulfilment of the rights of Afghan children, and to invest in girls' and boys' education, protection and healthcare.

Economic and Social Development

11. Participants welcomed the Government of Afghanistan's development agenda, which is focused on job creation and broad-based economic growth driven by National Priority Programmes on agriculture and rural development, human resources development, and economic and infrastructure development, as agreed at the London Conference. The international community supported the Afghan Government's strategy that seeks to achieve fiscal independence by unlocking Afghanistan's potential prosperity through an effective mix of investment in critical infrastructure and the development of a skilled labour force and of a strong, value-adding agricultural sector. The international community and the Afghan Government understood that the success of this strategy depends on the creation of a strong enabling environment for private sector investment, including public-private partnerships in social and economic development, through adequate regulatory and institutional reform.
12. Consistent with the realignment of donor funds behind these programmes, the Government of Afghanistan is committed to:
 - Further the design, costing and sequencing of the national priority programmes by October 2010, and undertaking their implementation to achieve planned outcomes;
 - Implementing the Public Financial Management Roadmap within the established timeframes to further strengthen the transparency and accountability of Afghan Government systems and to increase budget execution;
 - Setting out detailed plans to rehabilitate and expand regional transport and energy networks to realise the benefits of, amongst other things, its growing extractive industries sectors. This should be supported by relevant policy, fiscal and institutional reforms across these sectors, including implementation of mining regulations and establishing the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Secretariat;
 - Establishing a special Infrastructure Trust Fund within six months, leveraging the support and the capabilities of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB);
 - Maintain economic stability, improve the effectiveness of public spending, and increase domestic revenues in a sustainable manner by about 0.7 percent of GDP by March 2011, with a view to attaining fiscal sustainability over time. The underlying policies and reforms to support these objectives are set out in the understandings reached last week between the Government and the staff of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a new three-year economic program to be supported by the IMF's Extended Credit Facility.

Peace, Reconciliation and Reintegration

13. Participants welcomed the outcomes of the Consultative Peace Jirga, held from 2-4 June 2010. The Consultative Peace Jirga demonstrated the strong will within Afghan society to reconcile their differences politically in order to end the conflict. The Government of Afghanistan noted the demand of the Consultative Peace Jirga that all parties engaged in the conflict respect the need to bring lasting peace through mutual understanding and negotiations, in full respect of the values and rights, including those of Afghanistan's women, enshrined in Afghanistan's Constitution, and through inclusive elections. Participants welcomed the establishment of an inclusive High Peace Council composed of women and men to set policy, strengthen political confidence and build consensus.
14. Accordingly, Participants welcomed and endorsed in principle the Afghan Government's Peace and Reintegration Programme, which is open to all Afghan members of the armed opposition and their communities who renounce violence, have no links to international terrorist organizations, respect the Constitution and are willing to join in building a peaceful Afghanistan. The international community reiterated its commitment to continue to support this endeavor through the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund, and looks forward to local Peace Jirga meetings that include men and women at district and provincial levels to discuss elements of an enduring peace.
15. The Government of Afghanistan is to engage with the United Nations Security Council and the international community in an evidence-based and transparent process of delisting from the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1267 Sanctions list, in accordance with agreed procedures and common Afghan and international responsibilities.
16. As requested by the people of Afghanistan at the Consultative Peace Jirga, the Government of Afghanistan committed to reduce the number of people arbitrarily detained or imprisoned. In parallel, the Government of Afghanistan has committed to improve the capacity of the justice institutions in order to ensure due process in making these decisions and to address the most serious crimes. To facilitate this process, a Special Detainee Release Committee has been formed and systems and procedures are to be developed with the aim of releasing detainees whose detention is based on inaccurate information or unsubstantiated allegations.

Security

17. Participants recognized that civilian casualties and protection of civilians are of great concern and noted that most civilian casualties are caused by insurgent attacks. Participants regretted the death of every Afghan and international civilian, and Afghan and international military forces remain committed to the objective of a steady reduction in the rate of civilian casualties.
18. Participants welcomed the Government of Afghanistan's commitment to a phased exercise of full authority over its own security. The international community expressed its support for the President of Afghanistan's objective that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. The international community committed to provide the support necessary to increase security, and to the continued support in training, equipping and providing financing to the ANSF to take on the task of securing their country. Participants agreed to continue efforts to ensure stable areas benefit from development.

19. Within the framework of Afghan sovereignty participants endorsed the Afghan Government's plan, developed in coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), based on mutually-agreed criteria and phased transition to full Afghan responsibility for security, as set out in the technical Inteqal (transition) paper, and endorsed a decision-making process of the Government of Afghanistan and the North Atlantic Council (NAC). The international community committed to support the Government of Afghanistan in creating the conditions necessary to allow for transition and to continue to support the transition process to advance to the point where the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) are fully capable of maintaining internal and external security, public order, law enforcement, the security of Afghanistan's borders and the preservation of the constitutional rights of Afghan citizens. The Government of Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF are to assess jointly the provinces with the aim of announcing by the end of 2010 that the process of transition is underway.
20. In order to ensure stability and provide conditions for the effective rule of law, the Afghan Government pledged to:
 - Continue the implementation of the Afghan National Police Strategy and its underpinning Police Plan to build a strong, professional police force, with a focus on institutional and administrative reforms of the Ministry of Interior including the implementation of the Ministry's Anti-Corruption Action Plan, and leadership development;
 - Progressively enhance the quality and quantity of the ANSF such that the ANA reaches a strength of 171,600 personnel and the ANP of 134,000 by October 2011, with the necessary financial and technical support by the international community;
 - Support the ANSF, in line with the Government's financial means, with continued and sustained financial and technical support from the international community.

Regional Cooperation

21. Participants noted the importance of regional cooperation to prosperity, peace and stability, and applauded the recent joint efforts of Afghanistan and its regional partners to combat terrorism by ending support, sustenance and sanctuaries for terrorists from wherever they are, and the drugs trade, increase stability, enhance regional economic cooperation and employment opportunities, and address Afghan refugee issues. Participants re-affirmed their support for the objectives and principles laid out in the Kabul Declaration of 2002 on Good Neighborly Relations, in particular the shared determination to defeat terrorism, extremism and drugs trafficking, on the basis of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. Participants further recognized the need for greater regional coordination and extended their support to the inclusive vision set out in the Istanbul Statement on Friendship and Cooperation in the "Heart of Asia" of January 2010, which offers regionally-owned measures for enhanced regional cooperation.
22. Participants welcomed the meeting of regional organisations, notably the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) /ADB, UN Economic and Social Commission Asia Pacific (UNESCAP), and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on 19 July 2010, hosted by the Government of Afghanistan, and commended the agreement by these organisations for a plan for enhanced coordination of Afghanistan's regional engagement.
23. Participants welcomed the conclusion of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement (APTTA), and look forward to its successful implementation.

24. Participants underlined the importance of:

- The voluntary, safe, and gradual return of Afghan refugees in dignity, and the support of the international community to this process;
- The economic potential of Afghanistan’s natural resources for the stability of the state and the region, and the prosperity of its peoples;
- Integrated regional infrastructure projects, including transport; and encouraged both multilateral organisations and bilateral partners to promote such projects, including those presented in the Regional Cooperation Concept Paper submitted to the Kabul Conference;
- Investment in and expansion of railway and road linkages from Afghanistan’s neighbours, such as Abadan and Chahar Bahar to Herat, Zaranj to Delaram, Gwadar-to-Kandahar, and Hairatan to Mazar-i-Sharif, and Torkham to Jalalabad, which are welcome and highly appreciated. Afghanistan invites the international community to support for its integrated railway corridor across the country;
- The centrality of Afghanistan in the production, transmission and distribution of energy resources.

25. Participants look forward to the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and the concurrent business-to-business meeting, and which is to focus on regional economic connectivity and enhanced cooperation. Participants recalled the existence of various processes aimed at contributing to enhanced cooperative ties among regional countries, including, among others, trilateral summit processes among neighbours and regional partners. The Afghan Government and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) welcomed the forthcoming high level meetings of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, including the “Istanbul Forum” meeting in Kabul. They also welcomed the trilateral meetings of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and supported this trilateral initiative to include neighbouring countries of Afghanistan.

Counter-narcotics

26. Participants welcomed the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to update and improve the National Drug Control Strategy in 2010, with a particular emphasis on a partnership approach to ensure joint, effective implementation and coordination; capacity-building of law enforcement bodies across the government; and support the Government of Afghanistan’s plan to establish a functioning system to monitor measurable, time-bound targets. In addition, Participants

- Stated their intention to strengthen international and regional cooperation to counter illegal production, trafficking and consumption of drugs from Afghanistan. They resolved to fight the illicit drugs trade by supporting the Afghan Government’s initiatives and policies and to increase, with the cooperation of regional and other international partner countries, the number of poppy-free provinces;
- Welcomed the intent to strengthen the cooperation with relevant UN agencies, NATO, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and the SCO in the field of border control;
- Acknowledged that narcotics are a global challenge and combating them requires international will and cooperation; and therefore stressed the need for Afghan Government-led counternarcotics efforts, including agriculture development, interdiction, demand reduction and eradication, as well as corresponding public information.

- Called for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1817(2008) on combating deliveries of precursors for drug production in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and a decrease in the export of the pre-cursor chemicals to Afghanistan within twelve months;
- Welcomed the cooperation of the Government of Afghanistan with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to UNSCR 1267(1999) in the sphere of implementation of UNSCR 1822 (2008), including the identification of individuals and entities involved in financing or supporting activities of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, relating to the use of the proceeds of illicit cultivation production and trafficking of narcotics and their precursors, and recommended to continue such coordination.

***Next Steps: Supporting Afghan Ownership and Leadership,
Strengthening International Partnership***

27. Participants appreciated and benefited from the Government's strengthened inter-ministerial coordination mechanism under the cluster approach to prioritise and implement the Afghan Government's development strategy. Participants looked forward to continued inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation to achieve the National Priority Programmes presented at the Kabul Conference. They also affirmed that a review of progress is imperative to the continued delivery of action items from the conference.
28. The Afghan Government is to focus on reform of service delivery institutions, policy decisions and the implementation of the National Priority Programmes, within the framework of a prioritised Afghanistan National Development Strategy, in its rolling 100-days action plans.
29. Participants further welcomed steps to strengthen the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) in its support role for the Kabul Process. Participants agreed that the JCMB would meet every four months (supported by Standing Committees and their sub-committees) to monitor and assess progress of the Government and the international community in achieving the commitments stated above, and at the January 2010 London Conference. The Kabul Process is to include annual meetings between the Afghan Government, the international community, and civil society, including those providing services, to promote norms and standards for mutual accountability. Using existing resources, the government and the international community agreed to focus their expenditures on well-designed projects and programs. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community stated their intent to meet at Ministerial level, on an annual basis, to review mutual progress on commitments and to consider new Afghan priorities as part of the Kabul Process.
30. The Afghan Government committed to further prioritize and strengthen the National Priority Programs, including their implementation matrices for intended results and budgets. These plans will articulate 6 and 12 month, as well as 3 and 5 year targets, to ensure effective management and accountability, and the Afghan Government will refine them with the international community, including through the JCMB process, with the aim of building support for implementation. Key time-bound commitments are presented in this Communiqué. Participants supported implementing the Afghan Government's Public Financial Management Roadmap.
31. The participants recognized the paramount importance of holding transparent, inclusive and credible elections in the fall, encouraging the full participation of female as well as male candidates and voters, and the Afghan Government in particular is fully committed to ensuring this objective and welcomes the international community's support.
32. The broad and high level participation of governments and international organizations in Kabul is a sign of confidence in the future of Afghanistan and a message of hope and commitment to the people of the country. Appreciating this concrete manifestation of ongoing support, the Afghan Government vows to fulfil its commitments.