



REMARKS BY UN DEPUTY-SPOKESPERSON ON AFGHANISTAN CONSULTATIONS AND VISIT

NEW YORK, 17 January 2023 - On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, the Executive Director of UN Women, Sima Bahous, and the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, Khaled Khiari, started a series of high-level consultations across the Gulf, Asia and Europe to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in an effort to promote and protect women's and girls' rights, peaceful coexistence and sustainable development.

The visits so far covered several countries in the neighbourhood, the Gulf and beyond. They also met with the leadership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), groups of Afghan women in Ankara and Islamabad and a group of Ambassadors/Special Envoys to Afghanistan based in Doha.

Throughout the visits, countries and partners recognized the critical role of the UN in finding a pathway to a lasting solution as well as the need to continue to deliver lifesaving support. They asked that efforts be intensified to reflect the urgency of the situation. Government officials stressed the importance of the international community speaking with one voice with a unified approach.

The need for a revitalized and realistic political pathway was consistently highlighted and all remained firm on the fundamental principles, including women's and girls' rights to education, work and public life in Afghanistan.

Views remained on the need to find the right balance that would urgently enable a positive outcome to the current challenges.

Clear consensus was evident on the issue of women and girls' rights to work and have access to education. There was a broad sense that the region and the OIC's leadership on these issues was critical and needed to be strengthened with the full support and collaboration of the international community. The proposal of an international conference on women and girls in the Muslim World during the month of March 2023 was considered and agreed in principle.

The team also met with a diverse group of Afghan women. They gave powerful testimonies speaking to a range of issues including the profound societal impact and trauma on women and girls in the society. Overall, there was a deep sense of longing to return to an inclusive, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

The high-level delegation arrived in Kabul today to continue their engagement.

