



**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE
THIRD SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2017**

1. On 5 October 2017, the third Senior Officials Meeting (hereinafter called "the Meeting") met in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Meeting was held in line with the joint commitment by the National Unity Government of Afghanistan and its international partners, reflected in the Communique of the 4-5 October 2016 Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, to continue annual high-level gatherings to follow up on the new phase of partnership, based on principles of mutual accountability, initiated at the Tokyo Conference (July 2012). The Meeting focused on implementation of the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework first presented to the Brussels Conference, progress on the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, and policy issues related to advancing the priorities in these framework documents.
2. Delegations from 43 countries and international agencies along with ministers and senior national, provincial and urban officials of the Afghan Government and representatives of Afghan civil society and private sector attended the Meeting, which was co-chaired by the Minister of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to Afghanistan.
3. At the outset of the Meeting, the National Unity Government thanked the International Community for its continuous and generous support. In his keynote address, H.E. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, reiterated the Government's commitment to reforms that are building the foundations for a stable, sustainable country through a long-term process of reform and institution building. The President observed that Meeting was a time to assess what has been achieved and what challenges must be overcome. The President drew attention to the crises that the National Unity Government faced when it took office in 2014, including heightened insecurity, an ailing economy, and a political crisis. He highlighted steps that the Government has taken to tackle these challenges by taking ownership to secure the country, stop corruption, and strengthen the economy. He expressed confidence that terror can be rolled

back and beaten. The President stressed the Government's commitment to improving the quality of leadership in the military and applauded the armed forces. He stressed the importance of rooting out corruption in all sectors across Afghanistan and outlined steps taken thus far to tackle graft and send the corrupt to justice. He noted the launch of the Afghanistan National Strategy for Combatting Corruption. President Ghani highlighted Afghanistan's achievements on the economic front, in particular impressive domestic revenues. He said that the Government is concentrating on creating an enabling environment for the private sector; and a competitive, export-oriented, and job-creating economy. The President's speech highlighted Afghanistan's long-term aspiration to bring an end to the conflict and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to its partnership with the International Community that will help institutionalize reforms and make Afghanistan an anchor in a secure and prosperous Asia.

4. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to Afghanistan thanked the President for his insightful analysis and compelling vision. The SRSG noted that while there are challenges across the development agenda, the government has achieved important progress on key reforms, which deserve recognition. The SRSG stressed the importance of the development agenda as an important tool to respond to the demands of citizens and deliver needed services and support to the people of Afghanistan. The SRSG observed that the ANPDF links development progress to Afghans' demand to live in a country that is at peace and on the road to self-reliance. The SRSG encouraged participants to consider each element of their joint work through the lens of its contribution to peace.
5. The Minister of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan summarized the Government's progress implementing the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework. He elaborated the efforts that the Government has made to consolidate the budget by 2018, improve economic governance, build a solid domestic revenue base, increase regional trade and investment, create an enabling environment for the private sector, and ensure delivery of quality, valued services to citizens. The Minister described progress on the reform agenda outlined in the Afghanistan Peace and Development Framework and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework commitments, both of which guide the activities of the Afghan Government and the International Community. He highlighted significant progress made in revenue collection since 2014 and stressed that fostering growth means a redoubled focus on balancing revenue collection against enabling the private sector.
6. International partners reaffirmed the Communiqué of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, in which international partners committed and confirmed their intention to provide USD 15.2 billion (+/- EUR 13.6 billion) in support of Afghanistan's development priorities for the period 2017-2020. Delegations addressed the meeting to highlight specific priorities for ensuring that Afghanistan makes progress towards a more sustainable future for all Afghans. Participants stressed that sustained international support in the Transformation Decade requires resolute action by both the Afghan Government and the international community. They also acknowledged that the on-budget allocation of funding will enable the Government to achieve its national priorities as it delivers on reform areas. The Government reaffirmed its commitment to the program of reforms outlined in the ANPDF and highlighted progress made to date in implementing reforms including holding free and fair parliamentary and district council elections

in 2018, ensuring the human rights of all citizens including women, fostering the equal participation of women, and creating an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive. The Government stressed the launch of the National Strategy for Combatting Corruption as an important step in establishing the rule of law and ending corruption in Afghanistan.

7. Substantive policy discussions took place in two plenary panels on: (i) Enabling the Private Sector; and (ii) Governance.
 - In the first, panelists highlighted the need to address private sector concerns as a key to long-term sustainable growth, and resolved to continue recent efforts to implement initiatives and reforms. Participants appreciated progress on private sector reform commitments anchored in the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, noting that efforts had largely met and, in some areas, superseded the initial ambition of the current indicators. Panelists highlighted that while progress is encouraging, translating reforms into tangible outcomes may require time, and discussed measures to address other factors that may have impact on investment incentives. The Government reiterated its commitment to private sector development as a national policy.
 - In the second, panelists acknowledged the Government's resolve in the fight against corruption, with particular reference to the launch of the Afghanistan National Strategy for Combatting Corruption. They also noted that considerable challenges remain. They discussed progress and challenges in implementing reform measures across the Government, at both the national and sub-national levels. The Government reiterated its commitment to advancing the five pillars of the National Strategy, and to strengthening national and sub-national governance structures, as well as improved human resource management.
8. During a high-level luncheon the Government of Afghanistan confirmed again that the holding of timely, credible, inclusive, free and fair elections is essential for peace and the advancement of institutional democracy in Afghanistan. The Government also stressed that Afghanistan's peace and stability is intertwined with the region. The President announced that the second meeting of the Kabul Process will be held in Kabul on 25 January 2018.
9. The Meeting was informed by a side event on 4 October, which featured three plenary panels on: (i) Women's Economic Empowerment; (ii) State of the Afghan Economy – Drivers of Growth; and (iii) Infrastructure Development. H.E. Rula Ghani, First Lady of Afghanistan, opened the side event. The First Lady highlighted the opportunities presented to young Afghans by the National Unity Government such as better access to education and merit-based access to government appointments. She stressed that women in Afghanistan are progressing from dependency to self-reliance; citing examples of empowered women who have moved from single-skill laborers, to entrepreneurs; and who are now assuming a role as community leaders. She highlighted the need for a system of segregated statistics that would allow gender responsive budgeting. The First Lady noted the achievements of the Citizens' Charter and the Women's Economic Empowerment NPPs in the short time since they have launched.
 - Panelists in the first session underscored the need to enhance women's empowerment in order to ensure the vital contributions of Afghanistan's women in ending poverty and ensuring sustainable economic development. Acknowledging the important progress made to advance women's empowerment, including legislative reforms, panelists explored the remaining barriers limiting

women's role. The Government highlighted its commitment to remove remaining legal, financial and other barriers to women's participation in the economy and public life.

- In the second, panelists highlighted that Afghanistan's economic growth over the past two years has exceeded original expectations, but remains lower than needed. Panelists discussed current macro-economic conditions, and noted recent progress. They acknowledged agriculture and extractives as key sectors for promoting growth, job creation, and revenue, discussed preparations for future labor market needs, potential for growth in the urban sector, and stressed the Government's ongoing efforts to ensure the inclusion of refugees and returnees in national priority programs. The Government highlighted its commitments to finalize, and implement, an Extractives Industries Roadmap, to prepare for future labor market needs, and to advance fiscal sustainability and self-reliance.
 - In the third, panelists discussed ongoing need for infrastructure development, and the multiplier effect of infrastructure projects on the economy and employment. Highlighting the economic impact of regional cooperation, panelists stressed that Afghanistan's position at the crossroads between Central and South Asia can make contributions to development, peace, investment, and economic stability. After reviewing recent improvements in infrastructure planning and successful projects, panelists discussed the Government's approach to addressing challenges in the infrastructure sector, and the Government highlighted its commitments to continue improving infrastructure project preparation and delivery.
10. Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, reiterated the Government's commitment to making Afghanistan a better governed and more self-reliant country. He highlighted an end to the conflict as a most critical issue, praised the ANDSF and its process of professionalization. He stressed the critical nature of the Resolute Support mission to the future security of Afghanistan, the region, and our world. The Chief Executive reiterated the Government's commitment to credible and viable parliamentary and Presidential elections by the end of the current mandate. He highlighted the ways in which corruption is a key driver of instability and violence and called the new Afghanistan National Strategy for Combating Corruption a strong step in the right direction. The Chief Executive called upon all partners to work with the Government to move this important reform agenda forward.
 11. Participants acknowledged the contributions of civil society, private sector and media representatives to Afghanistan's development and political processes, and welcomed their contributions to the Meeting. Taking note of Afghanistan's membership in the Open Government Partnership, participants encouraged efforts to promote transparency and public participation in decision making.
 12. Participants acknowledged the encouraging progress on the reform process in spite of challenges, and looked forward to the Ministerial Meeting in 2018 to be co-chaired by Afghanistan and an international partner.
 13. The Co-Chairs thanked the participants for their continuing support to Afghanistan at a time of constrained aid budgets in donor countries, and encouraged all partners to continue their joint work to advance the priorities of the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and Self Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework.