



Dear Readers,

With the Geneva Conference last month, Afghanistan and our international partners entered a new era of cooperation. This new phase of partnership is based on mutual commitments which will see both the Government & international community take new measures to elevate the efficiency of this partnership to new heights. The new pledges of financial assistance by many partner countries signified continued commitment for Afghanistan's peace and stability – for which Afghanistan is grateful. The new national peace and development framework (ANPDF-2) was endorsed in Geneva, providing the basis for enhanced service delivery across various sectors. It will also be the main framework for building and consolidating peace during the post-conflict peacebuilding phase. With Geneva, the future-course of action has now become clear and we're approaching the way forward with defined strategies for progress in various sectors. At the same time, efforts to advance the peace process continue. Success will depend on several factors and the role of the international community will continue to be of great importance. To this end, the enforcement of a ceasefire and end to attacks which have taken more innocent lives, including in Zabul and Paktia - as of late - is an urgent need. This is a must to maintain the people's support for the process and to advance progress in the peace talks. Despite challenges, we're looking ahead with confidence for a political settlement that ends the conflict. Here at the Embassy, we are approaching the end of the Year, which – thanks to the dedicated efforts of all colleagues and staff – saw a number of important initiatives in the areas of public, peace, economic and cultural diplomacy and security and defense cooperation make important headway. We look forward to building on these initiatives in the New Year.

Youssof Ghafoorzai
Ambassador

Ambassador Ghafoorzai holds a VTC meeting with OsloMet and Kabul University for Start of Academic Partnership



The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo facilitated a joint virtual meeting with Kabul and Oslo Metropolitan Universities. Participants included, Ambassador Ghafoorzai as facilitator of the meeting, Chancellor of Kabul University, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Osman Babury, the Rector of the OsloMet University, Dr. Curt Rice and heads of relevant departments of the Universities. The purpose of the meeting was to identify areas of collaboration between Kabul and OsloMet Universities, spanning various areas, including international studies, social and health sciences, as well as technology, design and art. Ambassador Ghafoorzai emphasized on short-term and long-term initiatives of cooperation between various faculties and departments of the Universities. Some of the initiatives include: online-teaching, fellowships, capacity building, academic mobility and joint programs in the area of research. The Rector of the Oslo Metropolitan University, Dr. Rice and Chancellor Babury gave an overview of various programs and faculties of their Universities, with discussions focusing on identifying specific fields of interest for future partnership and collaboration. He expressed OsloMet's readiness to enter into direct collaboration with Kabul University. Prof. Babury also expressed his appreciation for the initiative for direct collaboration between the two universities. Participants also discussed the signing of a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the near future to begin the process of implementing their partnership. Dr. Rice and Prof. Babury thanked H.E. Ambassador Ghafoorzai for facilitating this meeting and taking the initiative to start a partnership and collaboration between the two Universities.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Delivered Opening Remarks at the 2020 Afghanistan Week



On November 16th, 2020 Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave opening remarks at the 2020 Afghanistan Week at the invitation of its organizers. Delivering opening remarks at this year's Afghanistan Week, Ambassador Ghafoorzai thanked the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) for their work in Afghanistan, especially in the areas of rural development and women's health. Norway's contributions, both via its bilateral relations with Afghanistan and by the work of Norwegian NGOs, have played a key role in the achievements of the past two decades in the areas of civil society, consolidation of democratic values, human rights and women's rights, enabling Afghanistan to reclaim its traditional role as a hub for cross-regional trade, connectivity and economic cooperation. He also noted that this year's Afghanistan Week comes at a time of both opportunity and challenges, in the context of the peace process currently underway.



Despite the Government of Afghanistan's display of compromise and flexibility with release of thousands of Taliban prisoners, there has been no reciprocity in return as attacks and levels of violence remain very high. He stressed the urgency of an immediate ceasefire to protect the lives of civilians and prevent any weakening of public confidence in and support for the peace process. Ambassador Ghafoorzai ended his remarks by expressing his confidence in the future of Afghanistan.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave a Lecture on the Afghan Peace Process, the Role of the International Community and the UN to the OsloMet University



On 11 November 2020, Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave a lecture on the Afghan peace process, the role of the International Community and the UN at the Oslo Metropolitan University. The lecture was attended by a number of prominent Afghan journalists from top media outlets in Afghanistan. Ambassador Ghafoorzai first highlighted the important role rendered by Afghanistan's journalists and media in the emergence and consolidation of democracy and pluralism in the country which was among the most important foundational achievements made in the past two decades. He stated that journalists in Afghanistan were making contribution to the country's democracy and future in ways beyond what's often imagined. He paid tribute to the memory of all Afghan journalists who had lost their lives in the service of their country and people and democratic values. Attacks on journalists was a deliberate attempt by terrorists to silence the voice of reason and truth, but such acts would not undermine the commitment of media personnel and civil society from helping secure the country's future. Speaking on the role of international organizations in Afghanistan, he gave a detailed overview of the historical role of the UN in Afghanistan, from its condemnation of occupation in the 1980's; the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) in the 1990s and role of UNAMA during the post-Bonn era, starting in 2002. He also spoke about the UN's engagement in Afghanistan post Bonn under (UNAMA) and its impact on the most important achievements made in the last two decades.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai holds a VTC meeting with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs & Defense



On 19 November Ambassador Ghafoorzai held a VTC meeting with Ms. Anniken Huitfeldt, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs & Defense of the Norwegian Parliament. Ambassador Ghafoorzai started by thanking Ms. Huitfeldt for Norway's long-standing and continued support for Afghanistan, including that of the Norwegian Parliament. Highlighting the importance of Norway's contributions in the past two decades, he stated that those efforts have been an important part of many gains achieved, including strengthening Afghan security forces, democratization, civil society, empowerment of Afghan women and human rights. He underscored that the Government of Afghanistan was engaged in the peace process as a matter of priority to end the decades-long conflict. On He stressed the important role of the international community's support of an Afghan-led process. Afghanistan was pleased and welcomed Norway's emphasis on continued support for the Afghan National Security Forces on a bilateral basis and also through the NATO support mission (RSM). He also underscored the increased inter-parliamentary collaboration between Afghanistan and Norway and referred to the Afghan parliament's establishment of friendship committee's with parliaments of partner countries. Ms. Huitfeldt reaffirmed Norway's long-standing commitment with Afghanistan and the Afghan people, and Norway's continued support for Afghanistan's peace and stability in the new era of cooperation to begin after the international Geneva conference on Afghanistan.

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Payed Tribute to the Victims of Terrorist Attack on the Kabul University



On 4th-5th of November, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo opened a book of condolences on the occasion of the commemoration of the memory and the martyrs of the recent terrorist attack against the University of Kabul. The Ambassadors and representatives of the Czech Republic, United States, Russia, Germany, Kazakhstan, India, Algeria, Slovakia, Poland, Romania and the Islamic Republic of Iran signed the book of condolence and condemned the attack and expressed their deepest condolences and sympathy to the people and Government of Afghanistan.



The ambassadors of Belgium, Cuba, Ireland, Vietnam, Sudan, Greece, Portugal, Egypt, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Georgia expressed their condolences and condemned the attack via email, as due to the current coronavirus measures, they were not able to visit the Embassy in person. Mr. Tore Hattrem, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway also visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo to express his condolences and Norway's condemnation of the attack.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai held a VTC Meeting with the First Deputy Speaker of Afghanistan Parliament



H.E. Ambassador Ghafoorzai held a VTC meeting with Mr. Mohammad Mirza Katwazai, First Deputy Speaker of the Afghan parliament. At the outset Mr. Katwazai highlighted that Afghanistan is now at a crossroads, a point in time in which Afghan people are seeking to overcome decades of conflict and achieve a dignified and lasting peace. He noted that reaching a dignified peace in Afghanistan required coordination between government, parliament, youth, women and the civil society. Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted the recent activities of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo in the areas of public and peace diplomacy. These included engagements with senior officials of the host country, the diplomatic community and Afghan diaspora on the Afghan peace process, focusing on ways to help achieve a successful outcome, that meets the expectations of the people. One of the initiatives mentioned was that which took place jointly with the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) Network, aimed at continued dialogue with women members of the negotiating team for exchange of experience and lessons learned. Ambassador Ghafoorzai thanked Mr. Katwazai for his interest in the Embassy's initiatives and highlighted the importance of taking such steps to enhance coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Parliament of Afghanistan. He also mentioned that Afghanistan is in critical stage of its political journey and such coordination is essential for Afghanistan. The two sides also discussed enhancing inter-parliamentary collaboration between Afghanistan and the Kingdom of Norway.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Met Dr. B. Bala Bhaskar, Indian Ambassador in Norway

On November 9th Ambassador Ghafoorzai received the new Ambassador of the Republic of India to Oslo, Dr. B. Bala Bhaskar at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo for a courtesy meeting. Ambassador Bhaskar is a civil engineer, economist and diplomat, with over 27 years of experience in the diplomatic field. He has previously served in the Indian Embassy of Cairo, the Consulate General of India in Jeddah and as representative of India to Palestine,



Minister at the Embassy of India in Washington D.C. and Chief Deputy of Mission for the Indian Embassy in Beijing. The ambassadors discussed the deep cultural and historical ties between Afghanistan and India, their shared history and continued partnership. India is now home to 18.000 Afghan citizens, while 3.000 Indian citizens reside in Afghanistan. Amb. Ghafoorzai hailed India important contributions in the areas of health-care, institution-building and education both in form of scholarships for students and training of public servants. The Ambassadors also discussed the current peace process, Afghanistan-India bilateral relations and Afghanistan's development strategy for the post-peace phase. Ambassadors Ghafoorzai and Bala Baskhar committed to engaging in joint cultural activities between the two Embassies in the new year with the participation of diasporas of both countries in Norway.

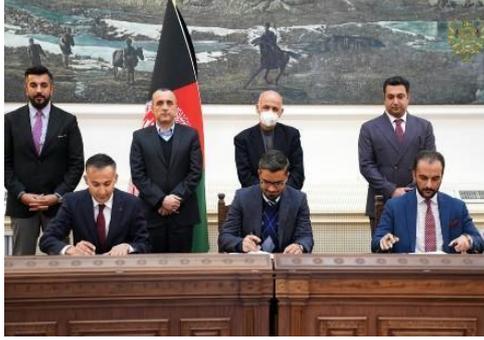
Geneva Conference on Afghanistan for Promoting a Sustainable and Developed Afghanistan



2020 AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCE
23-24 NOVEMBER, GENEVA

The 2020 Afghanistan conference was held on 23-24 November, 2020 in Geneva. It is co-hosted by the Government of Afghanistan, the Government of Finland and the United Nations. The participants at the 2020 Conference included high representatives of 66 countries and 32 international organizations, senior representatives of the government of Afghanistan, heads of international agencies and also representatives of Afghanistan's civil society, the women and the youth. The Afghanistan Conference was an opportunity for the Afghan Government and the international community to align and commit on common objectives and goals, aimed at promoting sustainable development, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. The outcome of the Afghanistan Conference is an affirmation of continued partnership and support, including new pledges of financial assistance over the coming years. The Government of Afghanistan also presented the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework II (ANPDF-II), a strategic framework for development with the goal to transition from an aid-dependent economy to a self-reliant one in a peaceful Afghanistan. Among the key measures are institutional and process reforms, strengthen public finance systems and combatting corruption. The international community also reaffirmed their commitment for a negotiated end of the conflict and an outcome of the peace process that meets the demands of the Afghan people preserving the gains of the last two decades.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Signed an Agreement to Establish an Energy Hub



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has signed a multi-phase agreement with Siemens Energy to establish an energy hub in central Asia by developing a modern, sustainable, and cost-effective power system, incorporating the massive potential of renewable energy generation. The agreement was signed by Abdul Habib Zadran, Deputy Minister of Finance, Mahmood Qadri, current Acting Director and Director of Finance and Administration Department of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), and other relevant officials.



The signing ceremony was witnessed by H.E Ashraf Ghani, President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Christian Bruch, CEO of Siemens Energy. Siemens Energy will support Afghanistan's power sector by developing a reliable and affordable electricity supply, whilst addressing the efficient use of natural resources, to improve revenue streams back to the government. Siemens Energy will also collaborate with the Government to develop training and vocational programs for the people of Afghanistan, supporting the creation of a skilled and competitive local workforce for the development of infrastructure and industries. The goal is to increase the access to electricity to unlock the potential of Afghanistan and stimulate economic and industrial growth. The plan will also enable Afghanistan to generate new income by leveraging its

geo-strategic positioning as energy transit hub and exploiting abundant domestic renewable energy resources. The development of this plan will provide long lasting benefits in Afghanistan which will be felt for generations to come.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock plans to establish commercial farming programs by offering thousands of acres of land to farmers who intend to raise cash crops



The Agriculture Ministry says that the new program will help farmers to eventually increase their crops "tenfold." Meanwhile, a number of farmers who previously raised cash crops said they achieved positive results from the initiative. Former who have started commercially farming now in three years, and they attest to good harvests. "Fields starts producing in their first year, the yields increased significantly in the second year, and on average every plot has the ability to bring in 900,000 Afs," said one of the formers. Commercially farming gives proper yields, this type of gardening is very beneficial, it provides substantial crops. Some of the formers says this they are planning to establish gardens on over 40,000 acres of land in the country, the main parts will be for commercial farming. They are also trying to establish business gardens for figs and dates. Afghanistan, despite having fertile lands and excellent fruit always imports fruits from other countries because of the lack of facilities.

The establishment of commercial farmland will help to reduce imports and increase domestic production.

In Helmand province 5,000 hectares of land has been cultivated in the province this year, and estimate that 23,000 metric tons of peanuts will be harvested

In Helmand province, 5,000 hectares of land have been planted with peanuts and estimation shows that this year 23,000 metric tons of peanuts from the fields will be taken, which is an increase of about five percent over last year. Helmand's agriculture directorate is also trying to aid the processing of peanuts. A number of farmers in Helmand province also wishes more investments in the development and processing of peanuts in the province. Since the product is very easy and can be grown in a very short time and at a low cost; also it is only possible to cultivate in Helmand, especially in Nad Ali district.



The crop can be harvested in three months and we are very satisfied with the yield. Peanut cultivation needs less water and less expenses. A number of farmers suggested that the government must create markets for peanuts in the province. Peanuts in domestic markets are a valuable crop and promoting their cultivation and harvesting in the country can be a suitable alternative to growing poppy for opium.



The Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo
Accredited to Norway, Denmark and Iceland

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