

Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians Dialogue-XI

December 17-18, 2013; Kabul, Afghanistan

Joint Statement

1. Members of Parliaments of Pakistan and Afghanistan met for the 11th round of Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians' Dialogue in Kabul, Afghanistan on December 17-18, 2013.
2. Parliamentarians of the two countries acknowledged and appreciated the positive momentum in bilateral relations carried forward through the visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister, Honourable Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, to Afghanistan on November 30, 2013.
3. MPs supported the vision of deepening of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan underpinned by a strong trade and economic partnership while appreciating the pledge made by both leaders to enhance bilateral trade to US \$ 5 billion by 2015.
4. Parliamentarians appreciated Prime Minister of Pakistan's announcement to enhance Pakistan's commitment of assistance for reconstruction and socio-economic development in Afghanistan from US \$ 385 million to US \$ 500 million. They also supported the initiatives to enhance connectivity between Pakistan and Afghanistan, including through a motorway between Peshawar and Kabul, rail links between Peshawar and Jalalabad and Chaman and Spinbolduk as well as building a trade central strategic corridor between the two countries.
5. Welcoming the democratic transfer of power from one civilian Government to another through Pakistan's 10th General Election held in May 2013, the two sides urged the two Governments to make use of the renewed prospects of peace offered by this to improve both neighbourly and regional relations. Parliamentarians hoped that a democratic transfer of Government in Afghanistan, according to the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan, will take place in a peaceful manner.
6. Affirming their commitment to build an environment of peace through dialogue, the two sides reiterated their resolve to continue the dialogue process to stabilize relations between the two countries. They also resolved to find constructive, meaningful and lasting solutions to improve and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.
7. MPs recognised that despite historical ties and brotherly relations, the trust deficit between the two countries continues to sully Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Parliamentarians, as representatives of the citizens in two countries, vowed to come forward to remove this trust deficit.
8. As representatives of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the MPs noted the progress achieved on various bilateral issues contributions for which were made in recommendations by the Parliamentarians in 10 rounds of MPs Dialogues held since 2008.
9. Parliamentarians urged the two Governments to work jointly for Afghan and regional peace and reconciliation process. They noted that extremism and terrorism remain a formidable challenge faced by both countries and joint and sustained efforts are required by the two States to overcome these challenges.
10. Parliamentarians reiterated the need for both States to put in place comprehensive and effective measures for border management, strengthening also the tribes on the

two sides to effectively monitor the border. Parliamentarians also stressed that the soil of the two countries must not be allowed to be used against each other and concerns from both sides should be seriously and honestly addressed on priority basis.

11. Parliamentarians also urged the two Governments to address security and humanitarian aspects of border management. Special attention should be given to the problems faced by IDPs from amongst the border tribes on both sides. Special packages should also be provided for the rehabilitation of residents affected by the conflict.
12. MPs, as members of the Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the two Parliaments, also urged the two Governments, while removing trust deficit, enter into a comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement. A draft of the same has been shared by Pakistan with the Afghan Government since November 2012. MPs asked for its early finalisation and signing.
13. MPs underscored the critical need for comprehensive Defence and Security Cooperation between the two countries while reiterating that elected Political Governments and Parliaments must maintain democratic control and oversight on defence and security in the two countries.
14. Parliamentarians of the two countries welcomed the focus on Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan in Pakistan's newly-constituted Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) and believed that the two Governments should create linkages between Pakistan's CCNS and Afghanistan's National Security Council (NSC).
15. Parliamentarians of the two countries urged the Governments to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for the honourable repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2015 in keeping with the trilateral agreement. They also supported Pakistan Government's offer of security and other arrangements to allow the Afghan refugees in Pakistan to vote in the upcoming Afghan Presidential election.
16. An urgent need was expressed by Parliamentarians from both sides to address the critical issue of rising water scarcity both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. MPs urged that the two countries, learning from regional and international best practices, should enter into a treaty on water-sharing.
17. Recognizing that while regional visa-free travel of MPs is facilitated through the SAARC, the MPs demanded that the two countries must also enter into a bilateral agreement to allow visa-free access to Parliamentarians and holders of diplomatic and official passports in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A relaxed visa regime that allows multiple entry visas of citizens of each country as well as business visas should also be prioritized by the two Governments.
18. Parliamentarians asked the two Governments to provide special protection to professionals of the two countries in each other's country.
19. Parliamentarians urged the two Governments to create joint comprehensive strategies to effectively address all aspects of the problem of narcotics.
20. Culture is the bonding adhesive of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In full recognition of the role that unimpeded cultural exchanges can play in promoting people-to-people contact and improving the atmosphere for the resolution of security, political and other issues, Parliamentarians urged both Governments to dismantle any remaining obstacles to Cultural Exchanges. Sports, especially cricket, provide an opportunity for strengthening contacts.

21. Parliamentarians also attached great importance to the electronic and other news media on both sides and urged for strengthening research-based reporting that can promote peace and business between the two countries on a long-term basis. Media of both countries should be allowed to be viewed in both countries.
22. Parliamentarians recognised the Pakistan pledge of 3000 scholarships to Afghan students and urged the two Governments to make greater investment in exchange of students. Promotion of contact among youth and woman was also urged.
23. Parliamentarians pledged to foster greater people-to-people contacts between the two countries in the forms of *jirgas* and friendship associations.
24. Parliamentarians urged the two Governments to allow speedy consular access to each other's prisoners. They believed that Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the two countries must carry out a regular overview of the conditions of the prisoners and a review of their cases through respective authorities.
25. Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the two Parliaments agreed to present recommendations made at the MPs Dialogue in their respective Parliaments. They also pledged to present the Joint Communiqué to the respective Parliamentary Committees on Foreign Affairs as well as the Foreign Offices and the Governments of the two countries.
26. Parliamentarians also believed the two countries should support each other's perspectives and positions on bilateral and multilateral forums including Parliamentary Forums.
27. Parliamentarians also recommended the development of a joint webpage of Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan Parliaments to enhance mutual cooperation and interaction.
28. Parliamentarians from both sides recognised and appreciated the initiative of PILDAT to foster these dialogues and urged that this initiative be continued and reinforced.

Facilitated by PILDAT, Pakistan Delegation was led by the respective Conveners of the Parliamentary Friendship Groups on Afghanistan in the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan, **Honourable Mr. Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao**, MNA (Charsadda-I, KP QWP) and **Honourable Senator Afrasiab Khattak** (ANP, KP). **Honourable Mr. Mirwais Yasini**, First Deputy Speaker of Wolesi Jirga and **Honourable Senator Rafiullah Afghan**, Second Deputy Speaker of Meshrano Jirga, Co-Chaired the two-day Dialogue from Afghanistan side.

The Pakistan Delegation that joined the two-day Pakistan-Afghanistan MPs Dialogue in Kabul, included **Honourable Sahibzada Tariqullah**, MNA (NA-33, Upper Dir-cum-Lower Dir, KP, JI), **Honourable Mr. Bismillah Khan**, MNA (NA-39, Tribal Area-IV, IND), **Honourable Mr. Ghazi Gulab Jamal**, MNA (NA-43, Tribal Area VIII, IND), **Honourable Malik Ihtebat Khan**, MNA (NA-58, Attock-II, Punjab, PML-N), **Honourable Mrs. Mussarat Ahmedzeb**, MNA (NA-323, KP-II, PTI) from the National Assembly and **Honourable Senator Abdul Nabi Bangash** (ANP, KP), **Honourable Senator Zafar Ali Shah** (PML-N, ICT) and) from the Senate of Pakistan. Special Invitees included in the Delegation were **Honourable Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi**, Former Deputy Speaker National Assembly, **Honourable Senator Dr. Mohammad Jahangir Badar** (PPPP, Punjab) and **Honourable Senator Mohammad Daud Khan Achakzai** (ANP, Balochistan).

Afghan MPs who joined the Dialogue included **Honourable Mr. Sher Ali Ahmadzai, Honourable Mr. Fakoori Beheeshti, Honourable Mr. Abdul Sattar Darzabi, Honourable Mr. Baz Mohammed Jawzjan, Honourable Nasima Niazai, Honourable Haji Sakhi Meshwani, Honourable Ms. Brishna Rabi, Honourable Ms. Zahra Tokhi** and **Honourable Ms. Arian Yoon** from the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House); whereas **Honourable Senator Gulali Akbari, Honourable Senator Haji Mohammad Daud Assas, Honourable Senator Sediqah Balkhi, Senator Nisaar Ahmed Haress, Honourable Senator Abdul Qayyum Nooristani, Honourable Senator Rona Tareen** and **Honourable Senator Fawzia Sadat** represented the Meshrano Jirga at the Dialogue.