

AFGHANISTAN'S REGION: 2014 & BEYOND

JOINT DECLARATION ON REGIONAL
PEACE AND STABILITY



ENVISIONING AFGHANISTAN
POST 2014

Perspectives and Strategies for Constructive
Conflict Resolution from the Neighbourhood

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Abstract

The future of Afghanistan is intertwined with the future of the region - a secure Afghanistan is crucial to establishing a secure region. As such, Afghanistan's direct and regional neighbours have the honour and responsibility of supporting its transition, political stability, security, peace and economic development. This *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability* has been prepared to underscore past achievements and to offer recommendations to be implemented in the Decade of Transformation, for the stakeholders to:

Main Objective; eventually to transform Afghanistan into an asset for all.

At National Level; build credible national consensus among state agencies, legitimate political opposition and civil society to agree on a non-partisan, inclusive national action plan so as to bring visible reduction in organised corruption; urgently develop a convincing economic transition blueprint; reconcile different Afghan positions on the peace process; conduct credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 respectively; streamline the various bilateral and multilateral forums with capable Afghan coordinating and steering roles at non-partisan levels; introduce pro-active regional diplomacy; improve governance; and make Afghanistan a safe and liveable place for its citizens.

At Regional Level; exert concerted regional efforts as endorsed by the Istanbul Process and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the country; pursue regional commitments to fight terrorism, extremism and militancy in all forms and manifestations; undertake effective and result-oriented regional, interregional and international cooperation to reduce demand and counter the production, processing and trafficking of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals; emphasise the need to establish a permanent national-level multidisciplinary Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Experts Working Group with a joint secretariat to determine the root causes of trust deficit and devise lasting solutions; organise trilateral talks between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan; support India-Iran cooperation and common interests in Afghanistan; deepen joint efforts by the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan; organise a

three-way Afghan-Sino-Pak dialogue on Afghanistan; and encourage inter-regional and people-to-people contacts and exchanges in all sectors of society.

At International Level; call on the United States of America (US) and its North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies to take confidence building measures to reassure the regional countries that their long-term presence in Afghanistan is exclusively to empower the Afghan people and that they espouse no other motives; emphasise that resolving Iran-US standoff would help Afghan-Iran bilateral relations; pursue the planned transformation of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) role in Afghanistan to train, advise and assist the Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF), while determining its time-specific post-2014 role with sustained aid for civilian sectors based on the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (Tokyo Framework) and visible reduction in organised corruption; enable the ANSF to defend the constitutional order, provide security and prevent a possible return of terrorist and extremist groups like Al Qaeda; promote development and economic growth; and encourage Pakistan to sincerely pursue cross-border threats.

Goal of Neutrality; during the Decade of Transformation and on all three levels, pursue an Afghan-led and Afghanistan-specific neutrality that seeks codification by the neighbouring and regional countries, and parallel or sequential codification by global powers and the United Nations.

To realise this *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability* in actual and practical terms, the existing Policy Groups will be transformed into the Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Groups (AASG) with representation from Track I and Track II officials and experts whose leadership will then formulate the Regional Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Group (RAASG) which will pursue and ensure the short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives as outlined in detail in the Declaration are pursued at the national and regional levels.



Foreword

This *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability* is an output of the regional Track II project, »Envisioning Secure and Independent Afghanistan Post 2014: Perspectives and Strategies for Constructive Conflict Resolution from the Neighbourhood.« It was launched in 2012 by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) as the withdrawal of the NATO-led ISAF commenced and regional actors expressed grave concerns regarding the implications of Afghanistan's security, political and economic transition on the region.

The position marked a shift in two fundamental ways: One, it recognised that the region and its views are becoming increasingly relevant for the long-term stability and sustainability of Afghanistan and the region itself; and two, it suggested a new working relationship between Afghanistan and the region. This remarkable shift presented an opportunity for the region to strengthen its role in securing Afghanistan's future, and thereby supporting that of its own.

It was within this context that FES sought to support Afghanistan and the region by developing Policy Groups and providing a platform for them to engage in robust discussions. Assisted by the Conveners and Facilitators of the Policy Groups, FES established and supported the formation of four Policy Groups, in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Asia (the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Through this project, it also developed a partnership with the Institute of Political and International Studies (IPIS) in the Islamic Republic of Iran and benefited from insight provided by the Chinese Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in the People's Republic of China. Proposals and suggestions made by the Policy Groups and partner think-tanks were published as policy papers and gave shape to this regional narrative, the *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability*. When considering the historical grievances and differences, the region having achieved consensus on deliberations and policy recommendations is a remarkable feat.

The exceptional value of the Declaration is situated in it presenting a common vision for the region through policy recommendations which have been suggested and agreed upon by regional experts in the Policy Groups

and experts of partner think-tanks who deliberated them between and within themselves, and with valuable inputs provided by individual experts from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey.

The Policy Groups and partner think-tanks boast the membership and expertise of former and acting senior diplomats, parliamentarians, civil servants, military generals, civil society members, analysts, and journalists. These Track II participants are well-connected to decision-makers and command a great deal of authority in their respective fields in their home countries. Mindful of the strategic interests of their countries, the participants deliberated suggestions and recommendations that are mutually beneficial to their states as well as to the region.

It is the firm belief of FES that a peaceful stabilisation of the conflict in Afghanistan is critical to protecting the fragile region from current and future threats. Therefore, the process of facilitating regional dialogue was based on constructive regional cooperation between Afghanistan and the region. Since the formation of the Policy Groups in mid-2012, and in addition to regular national meetings, a dozen bilateral and multilateral meetings have been held in the regional capitals – a joint narrative was only possible after these extensive trust-building dialogues. In bringing together key figures of significant influence, FES has facilitated a platform to build lasting networks among regional stakeholders.

FES is a German political foundation committed to the ideas and values of social democracy. Through its work in over 100 countries, FES supports the building and strengthening of civil society and public institutions. Central to its work is the promotion of democracy and social justice, economic and social development, strong and free trade unions and the advocacy of human rights and gender equality. FES has more than a decade of experience and expertise in facilitating high level dialogues in South Asia. Working towards peace and security in Afghanistan, where it established its office in 2002, is a key objective of FES in its regional work.



I. Preamble

After twelve years of extensive international engagement in Afghanistan, the country is preparing to exercise full sovereignty, which requires successful security, political and economic transitions, particularly with the regional consensus.

During these years, the international community, including the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries, provided substantial development and technical assistance that has transformed the socio-economic dimensions of Afghanistan.

After bringing some degree of stability by having increased the size of the ANSF to 352,000 personnel – a size to be financially sustained by NATO beyond 2014 – the NATO-led ISAF is now scheduled to substantially minimise its footprint. In ending its combat role by the end of 2014, the bulk of the responsibility will shift to the ANSF. A smaller, but significant NATO-led mission to train, advise and assist the ANSF will be present in Afghanistan during the ensuing decade.

The scenario is uncertain: Will the ANSF be able to counter and defeat terrorism and other national and regional threats? Is the region ready to embrace Afghanistan with its myriad of challenges beyond 2014 while helping to guarantee its security, stability and prosperity? And will the region work towards a comprehensive and mutually beneficial outcome based on multi-faceted regional integration, in harmony with legitimate interests of non-regional players?

In this *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability*, around 60 multidisciplinary experts, former officials and specialists from Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, after having held regular deliberations between 2012 and 2013, envisage assisting the governments of concerned countries as well as the relevant regional and global actors by presenting a joint narrative and postulating a set of recommendations, together with an outlook of their possible future implementation and monitoring. The Declaration is based on common objectives and shared interests, with the aim of successfully rendering Afghanistan's 2014 transition during the ensuing 2014 – 2024 Decade of Transformation.

See: Annex 1 for full list of regional experts; Annex 2 for the outlook of the Declaration; Annex 3 for discussion on the process of arriving at consensus and; Annex 4 for abbreviations and acronyms.

II. Regional Experts Declaration

Experts from Afghanistan's region,

1. (i). *Reaffirming* their respect to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, and (ii). *further reaffirming* their sustained support for Afghanistan and its people to build a stable, secure, democratic, and economically viable state, free of extremism, terrorism and narcotics, and based on the rule of law, sustainable peace and good governance,
2. (i). *Acknowledging* the highly sensitive geo-strategic crossroads location of Afghanistan, situated at the centre of the diverse regions of Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, the Far East and Eurasia, and the need for its integration to the global order, (ii). *recognising* the difficulty associated with the geo-strategic location – at times an asset and at others a liability – as well as the internal political, security and economic constraints of Afghanistan, coupled with the self-centric, ambitious, overlapping and – at times – competing foreign interests as key factors behind continued interventions and invasions, (iii). *stressing* the need for the emergence of a regionally interconnected thinking at an umbrella level, covering these regions with Afghanistan as the direct link to all, and (iv). *looking forward* to the evolution and adoption of a concerted effort to address the security, economic and political challenges faced by Afghanistan, and to improve the outcomes through result-based cooperation by its neighbours, and near-neighbouring and regional countries,
3. (i). *Noting* that Afghanistan today, as compared to the last few decades, has made some relatively remarkable – yet tenuous – gains with vast segments of its population residing in urban settings, including a more aware youth population willing to engage as contributing members of their region and the world, (ii). *acknowledging* the success of Afghanistan and its people in creating a competitive political environment by forming a multiparty system, laying down the fundamentals for a renewed civil society and enabling free media and free speech, and in this regard, (iii). *expressing* gratitude for



the efforts of the international community towards accomplishing these gains, and *(iv)*. *welcoming* additional efforts by countries that are increasing their civilian aid, including humanitarian support during the Decade of Transformation,

4. *(i)*. *Acknowledging* the assistance provided by the regional countries in the reconstruction and development projects of Afghanistan, in particular that of India, Iran, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, China, Kuwait and Pakistan, *(ii)*. *acknowledging further* the goodwill and assistance for the development of Afghanistan by the Russia and the CARs, and *(iii)*. *welcoming* a more robust role of the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries during the Decade of Transformation,

5. *(i)*. *Realising* that the regional threats impacting the regions of Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, the Far East and Eurasia are directly linked to regional instability and paradoxically that regional stability is intertwined with regional prosperity and growth, and that Afghanistan is the linchpin that can alter the outcome in either case, *(ii)*. *agreeing* that terrorism, violent extremism and militancy are common threats to these regions, and *(iii)*. *reaffirming* commitment that fighting terrorism, extremism and militancy in all their forms and manifestations, including the use of radicalised non-state actors and militia forces as proxies, among them unregistered private security companies, is an essential regional objective that, in particular at the present, requires a serious programme for urgent dismantling of hard and soft infrastructure, such as the safe havens which feeds and sustains them,

6. *(i)*. *Recognising* the need for effective and result-oriented regional, interregional and international cooperation for demand reduction as well as to counter the production, processing and trafficking of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals, in particular the on-going strong links between terrorist activities and illicit drugs, and *(ii)*. *emphasising*, while acknowledging past achievements by the neighbouring states such as Iran as well as the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) against trafficking of illicit drugs, the need to undertake a joint regional counter-narcotics effort, including creating an anti-narcotics safety-belt around Afghanistan, law-enforcement and interdiction, and to assist Afghanistan with the elimination of production

and trafficking of narcotics, and *(iii)*. *creating* alternative crop substitution and livelihoods programmes, as well as creating jobs in the industries and service sectors, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility,

7. *(i)*. *Emphasising* the importance of promoting and strengthening cooperation to combat the threats to peace and stability, and the need for a comprehensive approach to address the interconnected nature of the security, economic and development challenges in Afghanistan, while *(ii)*. *stressing* that the conviction in military solution alone will not solve the greater militancy problem in and around Afghanistan,

8. *(i)*. *Acknowledging* that Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have suffered from lack of trust since 1947, *(ii)*. *underlining* the absolute necessity for addressing the root causes rather than the by-products of the trust deficit, *(iii)*. *acknowledging further* that the current circumstances offer ripe opportunities in both Afghanistan and Pakistan as the primary stakeholders in seeking these opportunities, and *(iv)*. *recommending* to remove apprehensions at all levels to achieve lasting amity between the two countries through official and other channels in the interest of regional stability,

9. *(i)*. *Calling* for Afghanistan-related confidence-building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan as each harbours suspicions about the other's interests and activities in Afghanistan, and *(ii)*. *urging* them to reduce and overcome these apprehensions at all levels, including through official channels, in the interest and benefit of regional stability and prosperity,

10. *Expressing* the need for an early resolution of the Iran-US standoff, which would create a conducive atmosphere to better coordinate and implement development projects in Afghanistan,

11. *Supporting* greater India-Iran cooperation and common interests in Afghanistan, including coordination on the implementation of development projects and transit of goods to and from Afghanistan, the early contours of which are beginning to emerge,

12. *(i)*. *Encouraging* measures to reduce scepticism of the CARs towards Afghanistan and to form equal partnership between the CARs and Afghanistan, *(ii)*. *supporting*



steps to overcome the exclusive notion of Afghanistan as a source of threat among the Central Asian elites, analysts and academic communities, and societies, and (iii). *recommending* deepening joint efforts by the CARs and Afghanistan not only to combat cross-border threats and challenges, but also to develop infrastructure projects for trade and communications, and to strengthen cultural and humanitarian cooperation,

13. (i). *Stressing* the need for the execution of a responsible drawdown, including the retention of a time-bound residual of the NATO-led ISAF forces to prevent the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan which could impact the greater region, and to advise, assist and train the ANSF as well as to realise the commitments made in the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago (Chicago Summit) to financially sustain the ANSF beyond 2014, (ii). *calling* upon the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries to individually or jointly adopt measures that help the enhancement of security conditions in Afghanistan and its neighbourhood by assisting the process of improving security situation by fully cooperating and supporting the efforts of the Afghan Government, including the ANSF, in removing the threats to the security of Afghanistan, and (iii). *emphasising* the need to avoid interferences in Afghanistan in support of certain proxies either directly or via non-state actors,

14. (i). *Welcoming* all regional cooperation initiatives, starting with the 2002 Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, and the importance of regional cooperation endorsed by various international conferences on Afghanistan, (ii). *welcoming further* the increased regional cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours as well as among the countries of the region as an effective means to promote security and development, (iii). *recognising* the important role of existing regional organisations and programs, in particular the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), and the need to expand the scope of their efforts for further cooperation and integration in the region toward greater synergies, (iv). *acknowledging* ECO's specific efforts towards the reconstruction and development needs of Afghanistan through the establishment of »ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan« and other initiatives, and (v). *realising* that

although regionalism has gained momentum between some regions linked through Afghanistan, a holistic Afghanistan-centric thinking at an inter-regional umbrella level approach encompassing Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, East Asia and Eurasia, requires further effort by all stakeholders to understand the difficulty associated with the challenges in order to offer solutions and sustained international support,

15. (i). *Welcoming* the endorsement of both the Istanbul Process and the RECCA to promote regional security and cooperation through enhanced regional dialogue, CBMs and economic cooperation set out in the process to include: counter-narcotics; counter-terrorism; trade, commerce and investment opportunities; regional infrastructure; education; and disaster management, (ii). *agreeing* on the transformation of Afghanistan into a business hub and trade and transit corridor, linking the regions, including through the commissioning of natural gas and oil pipelines and transmission lines, and (iii). *stressing* the need to: enhance existing local and regional networks of rail and road transportation connectivity; improving the international civil aviation capabilities, including through increased foreign investment; develop infrastructure; pursue exploration and exploitation of natural resources and energy supply; integrate border management through bilateral and regional transit trade agreements; expand consular visa cooperation to facilitate business travel, in order to promote sustainable and integrated economic growth, including agricultural, humanitarian and social projects and indigenous industries,

16. *Encouraging* enhanced inter-regional and people-to-people contacts and exchanges in all sectors of society, particularly between members of the parliaments, security officials, civil society, youth and women organisations, entrepreneurs, business associations and the chambers of commerce, media and journalists and their associations, religious groups as well as between doctors, engineers and teachers and other representatives from different fields,

17. (i). *Hoping* that Afghanistan continues to be a key partner of the international community in the war against terrorism, (ii). *stressing* that in order to avoid deterioration of the situation and civil unrest based on the Tokyo Framework, conduct credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 respectively in accordance with the Afghan



Constitution and the required steps in preparation for them, and (iii). *emphasising* the need for unification of the positions by all Afghan entities, including the government, the High Peace Council (HPC), the Parliament, legitimate political opposition and civil society in order to provide more robust and independent mandate to the HPC to lead the peace process,

18. (i). *Appreciating* that according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) some 2.7 million Afghans continue to live in exile in neighbouring countries, (ii). *commending* the hosting of Afghan refugees by Pakistan and Iran as the situation remains one of the most significant and protracted refugee problems in the world, (iii). *acknowledging* that negligible assistance provided to Afghan refugees constitute a great burden on the resources and infrastructure of these two neighbouring countries, (iv). *stressing* the need for continued international protection and assistance efforts in host countries and for the safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration of the refugees, (v). *calling* on the officials of these neighbouring countries to focus on skilled labour exchange programmes rather than granting refugee status, and (vi). *welcoming* research on how the return of these refugees impact the social, economic, political and security developments in Afghanistan,

19. *Welcoming* previous, current and future alternative initiatives that are sound and practical, including all beneficial mediation and reconciliation efforts by the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries, and beyond,

20. *Noting* that the myriad of regional processes and initiatives need to be harmonised and fully implemented to ensure the security and territorial integrity of Afghanistan,

21. *Determined* to devise a lasting way for Afghanistan and the region to live in peace and prosperity, with the realisation of Afghanistan's legitimate interests in the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries, and beyond, and vice versa,

22. Therefore, *wish to assist* relevant regional governments and global institutions by making the following recommendations for the success of Afghanistan's transition in 2014 and the ensuing Decade of Transformation through 2024, hereby submitted in the short, medium and long-term propositions,

Main Objective:

23. (i). *Believe* that there is the need to eventually transform Afghanistan into an asset for all, itself, the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries and beyond, and (ii). *believe further* that in order to attain the main objective, there is the immediate need to ensure a smooth political, security and socio-economic transition to a genuinely representative and sovereign Afghan state as well as to the pertinence of finding appropriate mechanisms for non-interference and reconciliation, to formulate and adopt an Afghan National Transition Strategy,

Short-term Recommendations (to commence immediately and culminate in 2015):

24. (i). *Recognise* that the Afghanistan transition urgently requires political participation through an all-inclusive credible national consensus, (ii). *identify* that this consensus will serve as a catalyst in enabling a prudent and effective leadership able to pursue the collective Afghan interest by overcoming major differences and in being tolerant of alternative views, including the prevailing generational gap, in order to pave the path for transparent, credible, inclusive and timely democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 respectively, (iii). *believe* that this Afghan National Transition Strategy must incorporate the views of the state agencies, the legitimate political opposition and the civil society as well as others to agree on a non-partisan, inclusive national action plan wherein the international community's long-term commitments, their sustained presence and aid flow as outlined in the Tokyo Framework would be availed quid pro quo for Afghanistan achieving rule of law, security, transparency, credible elections, and economic sustainability, and (iv). in this regard, *believe further*, as is readily and widely accepted, that the media can be force multipliers in Afghanistan's reconstruction, revival and sustainability as well as disseminators of a positive image for security, development and governance,

25. (i). *Realise* that simultaneously, on the regional and global fronts, Afghanistan, its neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries must attempt to alleviate security, political and economic concerns surrounding 2014, (ii). *believe* that a planned transformation of the NATO-led ISAF role and a phased drawdown of their forces into a much smaller non-combat presence to



train, advise and assist, while determining its time-specific post-2014 role, presence and support for the expansion, financial and technical assistance for the ANSF, based on the Chicago Summit, ought to ensure that the ANSF is properly trained and equipped to preserve security in the post-2014 phase, *(iii)*. *believe further*, coupled with this security component, that sustained aid flows for civilian sectors based on the Tokyo Framework and substantial and visible reduction in organised corruption, a legitimate political transition and an increased and effective regional diplomacy will further:

- *(a)*. *enable* the ANSF, even in the event of extreme challenges to the state, including the continuation of fighting and possibility of civil war to defend and restore the constitutional order and provide security,
- *(b)*. *prevent* a possible return of terrorist and extremist groups like Al Qaeda while facilitating the transformation of the armed opposition into political actors and their participation in the democratic process,
- *(c)*. *promote* development and economic growth, strengthen democratic institutions and consolidate other gains of the past twelve years, and
- *(d)*. *render* probable increased Pakistani and regional roles toward peace and collective interest, and in this context, and
- *(e)*. *encourage* all entities in Pakistan to genuinely cooperate in the fight against cross-border threats and to pursue its legitimate regional interests through peaceful means,

26. *(i)*. *Call on* US and its NATO allies, who intend to have a post-2014 military footprint in Afghanistan that is time-specific, smaller and of non-combat nature, to take a number of CBMs to reassure Afghanistan, its neighbours and other regional countries that their long-term presence in the region is solely to empower the Afghan people and the Afghan Government to manage their own affairs as an independent nation-state; to combat terrorism, and to train, advise and assist the ANSF; as well as to defend their legitimate interests and to demonstrate that they espouse no other motives, and *(ii)*. *call further* on them to encourage the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries of Afghani-

stan to participate in joint anti-terror exercises so that their efforts will bring peace and as a result to share the peace dividends,

27. *(i)*. *Stress* that in order to overcome competing and, at times, conflicting views and national security interests of the neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries, and global powers, there is the need to complement, streamline and ultimately unify the various bilateral and multilateral forums with capable Afghan coordinating and steering roles, pulling together talent and expertise from the relevant state institutions, the civil society and the legitimate political opposition, *(ii)*. *stress further* that this will not only generate the needed capacity but will further enhance national ownership, and *(iii)*. *emphasise* also, while consolidating all interests under the Istanbul and RECCA processes and frameworks – as key current regional architectures – that supplementing them with collaborative tracks I and II efforts, in periodic security and economic convergence, consultations and CBMs will bear faster, more unified, and result-oriented outcomes within the sectors of security, stability and economic cooperation,

28. *(i)*. *Emphasise immediately* the need to establish a permanent national-level multidisciplinary Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Experts Working Group (preferably inclusive but depending on the circumstances in Afghanistan and Pakistan, of the Governments, Parliaments, legitimate political opposition groups and the civil society) with a joint secretariat, *(ii)*. *recommend* that in order to do this, the established group must study past and existing grievances to determine the root causes of the trust deficit between the two countries, *(iii)*. *recommend further* that the group will assess the root causes in order expedite the process of addressing as well as removing the easiest to the most challenging issues, *(iv)*. *propose* that as a next step, the group must devise mechanisms for lasting solutions as well as corrective measures to prevent their resurgence in the future, and *(v)*. *emphasise* that this group must use the above mechanism to overcome historic bottlenecks in order to enhance not only bilateral relations, but also to facilitate development, trade, transit, and prosperity for the wider region,

29. *(i)*. *Encourage* a resolution of the India-Pakistan differences and tension, *(ii)*. *welcome* the idea that improved relations between the two would also ameliorate the Afghan-Pakistan bilateral relations, which would expand



their overlapping legitimate interests in Afghanistan, (iii). *suggest* that this will contribute to better cooperation between the two on the Afghan stability and reconstruction while avoiding negative fallout due to the incessant India-Pakistan rivalry, and (iv). *encourage* a stand-alone trilateral dialogue between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan to expedite the above endeavour towards faster accomplishments,

30. (i). *Note* that the different positions of the Afghan Government, HPC, the Parliament, political opposition and civil society on the peace process should be reconciled, followed by opening a two-track inclusive dialogue with Pakistan and the armed opposition including the Taliban, with the aim of the latter participating in the 2014 and 2015 elections, (ii). *observe* that, given the nature of the conflict, the process will not succeed, unless jointly initiated and owned by Afghanistan and Pakistan, pursued through legal means and not infringing upon the Afghan Constitution, (iii). *recommend* that it must involve, in addition to domestic efforts, other regional and international players that can positively assist in the process, and (iv). *recommend further*, in this respect, a more active role of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Afghanistan or the appointment of a dedicated UN special coordinator as it would assist in facilitating the peace talks,

31. (i). *Reiterate* the need to smoothen the border crossing of people traveling and goods transiting between Afghanistan and its neighbours in order to expedite rapid transit of goods and persons, (ii). *recommend*, in this context, a speedy implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement (APTTA), including extending it to India at an appropriate time with transit rights for Afghanistan-bound Indian goods and vice versa on the basis of an agreement between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, (iii). *recommend further* that the agreement will prevent the goods transported between Afghanistan and India via Pakistan from being smuggled into Pakistan as this would disturb its economy, (iv). *reiterate further* that there is also the need to increase the volume and level of goods mobility as well as access to services between Eurasia, Central Asia and South Asia, and (v). *observe* that this will require the much needed infrastructure development as well as the necessary capacity building in trade and customs services to link: Central Asia through Afghanistan to South Asia; and, East Asia to Eurasia's Black Sea Corridor and the Middle East via Afghanistan,

32. (i). *Reiterate* that in order to overcome the possible economic deficit and the resources and financial gap related to the 2014 transition, a non-partisan, inclusive team of economic and development experts at the national level must be urgently formed, and (ii). *reiterate further* that the team shall work to produce the outline of the second Afghanistan national development plan (as the term for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy has expired), based on the transition realities and to bring together various disconnected but existing and relevant efforts by the international community in collaboration with the Afghan Government,

33. (i). *Urge* governments to ensure that private sector companies from their countries, which have won contracts in exploring and extracting the natural resources of Afghanistan, remain steadfast in carrying their projects forward successfully, (ii). *observe* that this, among other advantages, will cultivate a constructive environment for attracting more external investors into Afghanistan, and (iii). *recommend strongly* that relevant international or regional financial institutions safeguard or compensate the possible losses incurred to companies due to security reasons,

Medium-term Recommendations (to commence immediately and culminate in 2018):

34. *Stress* that in order to enable Afghan ownership, increase economic sustainability as well as build and upgrade state capability to deliver public services effectively and accountably, the international community and the Afghan Government must honour their mutual commitments beyond 2014 and through the Decade of Transformation,

35. *Express* support for increased regional efforts, including intense diplomatic undertakings (tracks I and II) in addressing each contributing source of regional tension towards the continued implementation of previous declarations of good neighbourly relations in line with the critical importance of advancing regional cooperation as an effective means to promote security, good governance and development in Afghanistan

36. (i). *Encourage* regional security and economic organisations and programmes, in particular CAREC, Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), ECO, SAARC



and SCO, and to coordinate the efforts of regional stakeholders for the smooth transition of Afghanistan beyond 2014, and (ii). *encourage further*, in this respect, for SCO to take a more complementary position in support of the Istanbul and the RECCA processes, especially in counter-narcotics law enforcement,

37. (i). *Stress* the prioritisation of regional endeavours for political, security, economic, social and cultural cooperation in order to effectively realise these priorities, and (ii). *stress further* that these endeavours will include strategic peace initiatives coupled with the realisation of shared and converging economic opportunities as well as other regional commonalities, including improving civil society ties,

38. *Emphasise* a resolution to Iran-US standoff as it would help improve Afghan-Iranian bilateral relations, allowing the legitimate overlapping interests of the two countries to expand in Afghanistan,

39. *Reiterate* that until Afghanistan overcomes national and regional threats, and achieves security and stability, it will continue to rely on the training, advice and assistance mission as well as the financial support of the NATO-led ISAF and the international community,

40. (i). *Underscore* the need to expand and intensify incentives to countries situated on the cross-regional transit corridors, particularly connecting South Asia to Central Asia, by ensuring adequate road and rail networks combined with better border, and (ii). *reiterate*, in this context, there is also the need to develop, extend and expand the Afghan railroad system and network, the precedence of which has already been set through Mazar-Hairatan and Herat-Khaf railways, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Iran,

41. *Welcome* a trilateral Afghan-Sino-Pak dialogue concerning the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which aims to cover Afghanistan and beyond – not only to improve physical connectivity but also to establish various industries along the corridor,

42. (i). *Stress* that efforts are needed to make Afghanistan a liveable place for its citizens so that Afghans are not forced to leave the country and seek refuge in the Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere, (ii). *encourage* official discussions on legal migration between Afghanistan and

its neighbours, with a focus on skilled labour exchange programmes, and (iii). *call* upon the international community to provide solid and sizeable assistance to relevant government agencies and NGOs involved in the provision of services to these refugees, in particular good education and vocational job-oriented training,

43. *Encourage* Afghanistan's immediate neighbours to assist the social and economic development of relevant adjacent provinces and regions of Afghanistan in the form of Special Economic Zones, in close coordination with the central and provincial governments of Afghanistan,

Long-term Recommendations (to commence immediately and culminate in 2024 or thereafter):

44. (i). *Welcome* the vision and goal to gradually strive for an Afghan-led and Afghanistan-specific Enduring Neutrality model (for details see the APG paper, »Enduring Neutrality«: Restoring the Traditional Trajectory and Securing a Sovereign and Prosperous Afghanistan), upon having secured the vast support of all major segments of the Afghan population and the region, contingent upon the success of the initiatives and prerequisites stated above, (ii). *recommend*, where necessary and applicable, this security-bound neutrality framework to draw from the Austrian, Swiss and other existing models, (iii). *emphasise* that such a status would not only need to be safeguarded by mutually reinforced, cross-cutting regional mechanisms that are practical and durable, but also well-positioned in the world order, (iv). *emphasise* as such, that it must be respected by its neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries and beyond, and be reciprocated with binding commitments of non-intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs and vice versa, (v). *emphasise further*, it must be guaranteed by the United Nations Security Council on behalf of the international community, with enforcement mechanisms in accordance with the UN Charter, entailing binding obligations as well as retributive measures, (vi). *encourage*, in the process, that Afghanistan must increasingly improve its internal security capabilities towards the fulfilment of the aspired objective, and in sum, (vii). *recognise* that Afghanistan must declare its neutrality be codified by neighbouring, near-neighbouring and regional countries as well as secure parallel or sequential codification by global powers and the UN,



45. (i). *Welcome* that the mechanisms will seek solid regional commitment and active engagement in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security, stability and prosperity of Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours, with practical measures towards their enforcement, and (ii). *welcome further* that they would strengthen multi-sectorial cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, including exploring and expanding joint economic and trade opportunities,

46. *Propose*, in order to enforce the mechanisms, to:

(i). *Offer* a definition for interference and steps to be taken to refrain from violations, (ii). *request* from the good offices of the United Nations Secretary General

to appoint a Special Envoy for the overseeing of this mechanism (unless the Istanbul Process takes a regional lead on this; alternatively, for both institutions to pursue oversight jointly) who will also facilitate the regional and international conferences,

(iii). *request further* to receive the endorsement of the mechanism by the Five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council at an international conference,

(iv). *seek* UN-mandated observers to monitor the breach of conduct, and

(v). *anticipate* that the mechanism will come into operation at the earliest possible and practical time.



Annexes

Annex 1: Regional Experts

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<p>CHINA (CICIR)</p> <p>HU Shi Sheng WANG Shi Da</p>	<p>IRAN (IPIS)</p> <p>Seyed Saeed GHADERI Ali Mojtaba ROUZBEHANI</p>
<p>RUSSIA</p> <p>Vladimir BOYKO</p>	<p>TURKEY</p> <p>Mensur AKGÜN</p>



Annex 2: Looking Forward

The recommendations made in the *Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability* can be classified under four major programmes: (1) Afghan National Transition Strategy, including a non-partisan and inclusive national action plan, (2) Regional Initiatives and Activities, (3) Planned Transformation of the NATO-led ISAF Role and International Support, and (4) the Enduring Neutrality Vision.

Each programme involves a number of activities and projects to be realized over a timeline of twelve years starting from 2013 and finishing by the end of 2024, with anticipated overlaps of some short-term, medium-term and long-term activities.

Programme 1 is expected to be implemented primarily by the Afghans inside Afghanistan. It is seen as a prerequisite to other programmes in preparing Afghanistan for meaningful regional and global engagement. Programme 2 encompasses a number of initiatives at the regional level, engaging Afghanistan, its neighbours and near-neighbouring and regional countries. Programme 3 involves the wider international community and Afghanistan, while Programme 4 outlines the strategy for Afghanistan's gradual accession to the status of neutrality. This requires efforts at national, regional and international levels.

Intense lobbying is required to advocate the above programmes to Track I policy-makers and decision-makers so as to transform these recommendations into concrete government policies and mechanisms.

The regional experts envisage a two-path strategy towards the implementation and monitoring of the recommendations made in this Declaration. Path one concerns all relevant Track I governments and organisations expected to work with the contents of the Declaration in the future. Path two is designed for the existing regional Policy Groups in Afghanistan, Central Asia, India and Pakistan, as well as their partner agencies and experts in China, Iran, Russia and Turkey to pursue. The two paths may work independently as well as in close coordination and cross each other at different intervals.

Path One

The experts involved in making this Declaration have been instrumental in advocating for the short-term recommendations to be pursued. Some of the short-term recommendations are already being implemented by key stakeholders. For example, steps have already been taken towards the recommended all-inclusive credible national consensus inside Afghanistan.

More detailed proposals will be developed for some of the main recommendations of the Declaration after initial consultation with relevant Track I officials in November and December 2013. These proposals will aim to focus on practicality, conducting impact assessment of different stakeholders, and effective monitoring and evaluation.

A detailed proposal is already being developed with regards to enduring the neutrality of Afghanistan, together with its monitoring mechanism. Depending on the success of Track II lobbying and interests of Track I officials, other research papers and detailed proposals will be prepared for other recommendations.

As recommendations move towards being developed as government agendas in different relevant countries, coordination with other clustered activities and relevant stakeholders is required at the regional and global levels.

Path Two

In order to pave the way for the above-mentioned programmes to be successfully lobbied and implemented through Track I, the following steps and timeline are proposed:

- a.i.1. National launch of the Declaration in Kabul in mid-November 2013
- a.i.2. International launch of the Declaration in Istanbul by late November 2013
- a.i.3. A road-show in major capitals such as Berlin, Brussels, New York and Washington DC between late January and early February 2014
- a.i.4. Formation of the High-Level International Lobby Group (HLILG) by March 2014



- a.i.5. Launch of national debates and intense government lobbying in Afghanistan and its neighbouring, near-neighbouring and other regional countries throughout 2014. The Policy Groups and their partner agencies, the IPIS in Iran and the CICIR in China, will develop their independent schedule of activities at their home countries. The Afghanistan Policy Group is to remain steadfast in furthering the goals and agenda of this Declaration and maintain their independence, regardless of the developments of the presidential elections, currently scheduled to be held in April 2014.
- a.i.6. Transformation of the existing Policy Groups into expert-based Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Groups (AASG) in each country, following ownership of the Declaration by Track I, at the latest by early 2015. Where possible, each AASG is to include high-level representation from relevant government offices, parliament, legitimate political opposition, civil society and the private sector. This is highly advisable particularly for the Afghan AASG.
- a.i.7. Formation of the Regional Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Group (RAASG), at the latest by mid-2015. The RAASG is to be primarily composed of the heads of the AASGs. Its primary task will be to take the above four programmes as its agenda and work towards their implementation and coordination with relevant regional governments, institutions and other stakeholders.
- a.i.8. The RAASG is to design and assign an appropriate monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the recommendations of the Declaration from 2015 through 2024.

Annex 3: Process of Arriving at Consensus

The process of arriving at consensus on such critical issues that are time sensitive, particularly in light of the close - and often tense - relations shared by the regions surrounding Afghanistan – cannot be achieved overnight. Indeed, the process required the commitment of key players to hold frank discussions by committing their time, talents and experience.

The project officially commenced in mid-2012 and within a matter of months – by September 2012 - the four Policy Groups had not only been established, but had

also held their first meetings in Afghanistan, Central Asia, India and Pakistan. The next month, the first Regional Conveners, Facilitators and Experts Meeting was held in Abu-Dhabi. This meeting benefited from the participation of experts from Iran, Russia and Turkey.

By early November 2012, the Afghanistan Policy Group (APG), India Policy Group (IPG) and Pakistan Policy Group (PPG) had held their first set of bilateral meetings and developed a draft of their policy papers. These bilateral meetings were then followed by an Inter-regional Summit in Dubai later that same month. In Dubai, the regional experts discussed the roles of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan; ways to alleviate existing regional trust deficit, enhance regional economic cooperation, and develop a regional approach to secure peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The start of 2013 witnessed the Policy Groups exchange their respective policy papers and offer constructive feedback so as to address shared concerns. The national policy papers were finalized by January 2013.

In February 2013, a FES delegation visited Tehran and met with the IPIS to share these policy papers. At the invitation of the CICIR, the following month, a joint delegation of the APG, IPG and FES visited Beijing in March 2013. The delegation held talks with senior members of the CICIR as well as with the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) and other leading Chinese experts at Renmin University.

Also in this month, bilateral meetings were held between the APG and the PPG in Dubai. Key items on the agenda included: security concerns of both countries; risk analysis of HPC Roadmap 2015; trade and commerce issues; and review of comments on policy papers.

The APG then hosted another bilateral talk, the first between APG and the Central Asia Policy Group (CAPG), in Kabul in May 2013 to discuss security and stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia, trade and transit issues, peace and policy options.

In June, the second Meeting of Conveners, Facilitators and Experts was held in Berlin. During this meeting the overview of the Declaration was presented and feedback was given by regional conveners and experts. Following successful engagement with relevant policy makers in Berlin, Brussels as well as Paris, an APG representative



attended a workshop on neutrality in Washington DC. That same month in September, the third APG-PPG bilateral meeting was held.

As the Declaration gained momentum much of September and October was dedicated to reviewing and fine-tuning the text of the Declaration. Drafts were shared with the Policy Group and experts who then offered their suggestions, advice, and expressed any remaining reservations right through the month. Final

comments were incorporated after the second IPG-PPG bilateral meeting in Dubai in late October.

The final declaration was vetted and agreed upon all by end of October. The process has been tedious and rigorous. The Declaration would not have been the jointly produced document that accommodates the position and priorities of the region without this thorough process. Its merit and value is based on it being jointly produced and therefore collectively owned by the region.



Annex 4: Abbreviations and Acronyms

AASG	Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Group
APG	Afghanistan Policy Group
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANSF	Afghanistan National Security Force
APTTA	Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement
CAPG	Central Asia Policy Group
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
Chicago Summit	2012 NATO Summit in Chicago
CICIR	Chinese Institute for Contemporary International Relations
CIIS	China Institute of International Studies
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
HLILG	High-Level International Lobby Group
HPC	High Peace Council
IPG	India Policy Group
IPIS	Institute of Political and International Studies
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PPG	Pakistan Policy Group
RAASG	Regional Afghanistan Advocacy and Support Group
RECCA	Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
Tokyo Framework	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States of America

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