

IEA – Foreign Minister’s Speech at the “Afghanistan’s Regional Cooperation Initiative” Conference

Kabul, Afghanistan January 29, 2024



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين و صلاة و سلام على خير خلقه محمد و على آله و اصحابه اجمعين، اما بعد:

At the outset, let me welcome all Special Envoys, Ambassadors, and representatives from regional countries to Afghanistan’s Regional Cooperation Initiative Conference. I hope we will conduct constructive discussions seizing this opportunity, to pave the way for the improvement and development of relations between Afghanistan and regional countries.

Dear participants,

this meeting is mainly aimed at discussions and talks on establishing a region-centric narrative aimed at developing regional cooperation for a positive and constructive engagement between Afghanistan and regional countries. By seizing this opportunity, I hope we will talk about utilizing the opportunities created in post-occupation and war Afghanistan.

Regional cooperation could be focused on the following:

- Exploring region-centric and engagement pathways based on common regional benefits;
- Creating a region-centric narrative for positive and constructive engagement with the Afghan government to tackle existing and potential threats in the region;
- Exerting efforts directed at soft connectivity and hard connectivity that would lead to regional economic development benefitting peoples of the region;
- Unanimity in calling for the removal of unilateral sanctions on the region and Afghanistan in particular; and
- Respecting one another’s choices of

indigenous and traditional development models and governance methods.

Dear participants,

Over the span of less than two and a half years since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan took charge of affairs, we have had good engagements in the fields of trade development and regional transit with regional and neighboring countries. Something that was a mere dream for decades due to imposed wars and insecurity in Afghanistan.

On the one hand, with the end of the 20-year occupation and the overall 45-year war and bloodshed in Afghanistan, and the formation of an independent central government, on the other hand, the Islamic Emirate’s region-centric perspective considering the principle of economy-centered foreign policy of the Afghan government, reliant on regional connectivity, has paved the way for us to work together on common interests in cooperation with the region by creating a region-centric narrative and continue to fight potential threats.

Afghanistan as a country that has experienced insecurity and instability for nearly half a century, in no circumstances wants any other country in the region to experience insecurity and instability. Regional security remains of grave importance for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan stands ready to engage and cooperate with the regional countries by working together based on mutual interest and mutual respect. The

Afghan government's policy over the last nearly two and a half years has depicted that the New Afghanistan defines its interests with the region in a win-win mechanism - and proposes that all actors negate the Zero-Sum perspective and invest in a win-win game rule and cooperation.

During the governance of the Islamic Emirate, it has certainly been proven that a regional perspective revolving around economic connectivity with the region at its center constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the Islamic Emirate's foreign policy. This is not a mere slogan, but we believe Afghanistan and the region's economic progress and development share a consistent relation. This economic dependency requires further enhancement of joint work in the region.

It requires that the countries of the region, in coordination and positive and constructive cooperation with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, on one hand, prevent the possibility of the emergence of an unfavorable situation in the region, and on the other hand, utilize the regional connectivity opportunities in the post-war phase and increasing region-centric engagements as a main objective. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the region can reduce potential threats and optimize new opportunities by creating an engagement-oriented and constructive narrative in all domains as opposed to an evasive and inconsistent narration.

Dear participants,

I would like to take this opportunity to put across to you a clear message:

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan respects others' interests, choices, government structures, and development models, and in return, expects others to respect Afghanistan's interests, and governance and development choices and models.



After 20 years of fighting for freedom and the establishment of the Islamic system, today we take our destiny into our own hands. Unfortunately, Afghanistan's distant and proximate history has proved that the imposed imported models have not been effective for Afghanistan. During the past nearly half a century of wars and instability in Afghanistan, it was seen that the imported plans for Afghanistan did not heal the pain of the Afghan people.

Whether it was models offered by countries or international organizations...or the plans by special envoys...the alien prescriptions presented under any name and address have had reverse results. Moreover, unfortunately, the UN plans conveyed during the tenures of its various envoys also have led to nothing but war, instability, and occupation of Afghanistan.

Therefore, considering the historical lessons, previous experiences should not be repeated. Today, following at least two decades of struggle and sacrifices of the Afghan people, Afghanistan is a sovereign, free, and safe country that has a government, representing Afghanistan and can work on issues of interest with the region and the world. Afghanistan as a country that has gone through long imposed conflicts, and has achieved peace, security, and stability – does not need another UN special representative and/or new mission with UNAMA already on the ground – but this government stands ready and can conduct talks on common and concerning issues with different regional and international sides.

Seizing this opportunity, I request all gathered here to portray ground realities of today's Afghanistan in the upcoming Doha meeting to the distant sides, so that they can enter into constructive engagement and cooperation with a realistic, sensible, and acceptable



approach for Afghanistan. It is noteworthy that Afghanistan does not seek confrontation and controversy with any side.... rather always stresses positive engagement.

Therefore, our choices shall be respected. Instead of proposing governance models and pointing fingers at the System, it is better to engage in mutual interests.

Following nearly half a century of aggressions, interventions, chaos, and instability – it is good to finally give a chance to an indigenous solution to the problems. The performance of less than the past two and a half years - contrary to some negative predictions - has been very good despite the illegitimate and unilateral sanctions. During this time, Afghanistan has been able to organize its governance structure, organize the triple security forces, neutralize national and regional threats by antagonist groups, ban poppy cultivation, mobilize the country's economic engine, kick-off major development projects, and take pragmatic steps toward regional trade and transit prosperity.

Dear participants,

I would like to make this clear; Afghanistan too has problems like any other country. In a country that has been the target of foreign invasions, interventions, and internal wars for

nearly half a century, it is not possible to resolve all the problems in a short period. Nevertheless, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is resolved to find a solution for the problems that are mostly inherited from the past.

Grabbing this opportunity and initiative, also through the remaining regional mechanisms such as Afghanistan's neighboring countries' ministerial meeting or the Moscow format, we hope to succeed in reaching a regional consensus that preserves all actors' interests. Within the framework of such regional consensus, we can pave the way for finding incentive mechanisms to reach thematic agreements that serve mutual interest.

Dear Participants,

Today in our common region, the atrocities and crimes against the innocent and defenseless people of Palestine by the Zionist regime are a matter of grave regret and cause for serious concern.

Once again, while strongly condemning these crimes, I call on the international community to jointly prevent these barbaric atrocities and the genocide of the Palestinian people, and ensure their legitimate rights.

To conclude, I welcome all the participants once again – and hope to have helpful discussions and talks.

Speech by Honorable Zabihullah Mujahid, Head of the Delegation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Doha 3 Meeting



June 30, 2024

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful

Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the United Nations, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, respected representatives of countries and institutions, and especially the representative of the host country, Qatar, good evening!

I am pleased to represent the government and people of Afghanistan at such an opportune moment, initiated by the United Nations for Afghanistan, and to meet with representatives from numerous countries and international organizations.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership of the government of Qatar for their valuable assistance in organizing and facilitating this meeting.

Our participation in this Doha meeting demonstrates that, despite the considerations we have, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is committed to positive engagement.

We perceive the current Doha meeting as a crucial opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue regarding the unilateral and multilateral sanctions imposed on some officials and our financial and banking sectors, as well as the broader challenges confronting our national economy. This forum represents a positive step towards addressing these issues and providing reassurance to the Afghan people that the imposed restrictions on our nation will be alleviated in due course.

Dear Participants!

Afghans are questioning why the easing of sanctions on financial and trade sectors remains slow-paced? Why the government and the private sector consistently confronting various challenges? Afghans, who have been suffering from war and insecurity as a result of foreign invasions and interference for almost half a century, ultimately, gained independence, ended the war and built a system aimed at fostering positive engagement with the world, however, in return they faced sanctions and restrictions?

Is it fair and appropriate?

I do not deny that some countries may have problems with some measures of the Islamic Emirate. I think that policy differences amid states are natural, and it is the duty of experienced diplomats to find ways of interaction and understanding rather than confrontation.

The policy differences should not escalate to the extent that powerful countries use their leverage to impose security, political, and economic pressures on our people, affecting the lives of our nation in a significant way.

In addition, despite unilateral and multilateral

unfreezing national reserves, some countries have continued with their policy of non-cooperation.

Dear Participants!

As our nation has fought throughout history for political independence and made historical sacrifices, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is now endeavoring to achieve economic independence by laying the foundations of a self-sustaining and secure national economy. We are committed to advancing real economic development in Afghanistan, taking initial steps towards creating jobs, establishing factories, lifting people out of poverty, and creating business opportunities for women.



sanctions and pressures, we banned the cultivation, processing and smuggling of poppy which affected the world.

Poppy cultivation, which remained as a significant challenge in Afghanistan, we reduced it to almost zero; however, in contrast, instead of recognizing and commending these initiatives, lifting banking restrictions to stimulate the country's economy and

We appreciate the countries that provide humanitarian aid, however, the main solution to the economic obstacles of Afghans is to remove unilateral and multilateral sanctions, provide development aid and allow the government and people of Afghanistan to utilize their capacities without restrictions for the revival of the national economy.