

## Key elements for sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan

The undersigned participants discussed the modalities of their future international support to Afghan-owned and led peace and development in Afghanistan. The undersigned represents about 80% of the total official development assistance to Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

The participants welcome the start of formal direct Intra-Afghan Negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban with the view of a lasting political settlement, and reiterated their support for a sustainable negotiated end to the conflict. The participants agreed to advise the parties to the Intra-Afghan Negotiations that sovereign decisions made by Afghans in these talks about their country's future governing arrangements will determine donor development and budget support to Afghanistan.

In view of the ongoing peace efforts, and the immense challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis, the participants renewed their readiness to supporting the Government and the people of Afghanistan, on their path towards peace, democracy, prosperity and self-reliance. To this end, participants stand ready to mobilise all available instruments to accompany and follow up on a peace settlement, including the extension of our development programmes to areas previously underserved, and remain committed to extending the provision of humanitarian aid and all assistance needed to respond to the pandemic in Afghanistan. The level and the nature of the progress in Afghanistan will be key to mitigate the financial constraints imposed by the global economic effects of COVID-19 and other competing global challenges.

Participants also agreed, and want to convey to all Afghans, that the following key elements will be taken into account when considering the continuation of their current development and budgetary support to Afghanistan:

**1. An inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that preserves and builds on the political, economic and social achievements of the Afghan people since 2001.** We believe it is of vital importance that all human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially the rights of women, children and minority groups, are protected and further promoted throughout the negotiations as well as in the subsequent agreement and its implementation, and that the peace process lives up to the expectations of the vast majority of Afghans.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: OECD Statistical database (<https://stats.oecd.org/>), CRS table. The percentage share has been calculated based on Official Development Assistance (ODA) gross disbursements in 2018, dividing the total bilateral (including multi-bilateral) ODA from the 13 undersigned by the total ODA from all official donors (including DAC countries, non-DAC countries and multilaterals).

**2. A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.** An immediate agreement to this would improve aid delivery and provide needed respite to the Afghan people. In the meantime, and since Afghanistan is facing the COVID-19 pandemic and aid is urgently needed, the undersigned stress the importance of an effective response and urge all Afghan parties to immediately reduce violence, to heed the UN Secretary-General's call for a comprehensive and nationwide ceasefire, endorsed by the vast majority of nations and organisations, and formally confirmed by the UN Security Council's call to work towards a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and to ensure access of humanitarian actors throughout the country in accordance with international humanitarian law.

**3. Continued commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and human rights,** given that Afghanistan is a signatory of the UN Charter and committed to the values and rights enshrined therein. The level of ambition of international cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan will depend on the extent to which these values are respected. In particular, we note the importance of women's empowerment and the full and equal enjoyment of their rights, the rights of the child, the rights of persons belonging to marginalised groups and the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

**4. Peace negotiations and the subsequent agreement, as well as its implementation, conducted in an inclusive way** that respects the human rights of all Afghans, in particular women, children, minorities and persons belonging to marginalised groups. An inclusive approach will be required to address the interests of the numerous victims of war (including the disabled, the internally displaced and the refugee population) in peace negotiations. We consider any peace agreement will have to address the need for transitional justice. We look forward to Afghan leaders demonstrating their capacity to gather around the national interest and the protection of the country's unity and integrity.

**5. A meaningful, demonstrable fight against corruption,** evidenced by measures such as the prosecution of corrupt officials and recovery of stolen assets to the Afghan state, that are anchored in a clear and comprehensive national anti-corruption strategy. To provide services to citizens and promote stability, this requires that resources are distributed fairly and transparently, and should be informed by engagement from citizens and local leaders.

**6. Respect for Afghanistan's international obligations and Afghan State institutions.** While respecting the sovereign right of Afghans to determine their constitutional order, we urge the parties to retain fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law for all Afghans and to ensure that any constitutional changes are carried out through a mutually agreed, democratic and inclusive process. The Participants note that full respect for the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and commitment to the inviolability

and security of foreign missions will be essential for the provision of international development assistance to Afghanistan.

**7. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a guiding framework for continued international development assistance to Afghanistan.** This means that any benefits of peace, from short-term provision of humanitarian needs to longer-term socio-economic development, should be distributed fairly among all Afghans. Lasting peace would create an environment of security and stability for all Afghans, helping to eradicate poverty, preventing irregular migration and allowing for safe, dignified, and orderly returns. Re-integration of former combatants, refugees and IDPs into society and their inclusion into development process should also be ensured. If requested by the parties, participants stand ready to offer their full support to all stages of an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process, to help secure a durable, inclusive, peace agreement that enables all to build stronger partnerships with Afghanistan towards achievement of the SDGs.

**8. The commitments by the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to prevent any international terrorist groups or individuals, from using Afghan soil to threaten the security of other countries, and their commitments to combatting drug-trafficking and illegal networks of human trafficking.** The Participants expect Afghanistan to combat terrorism in all its forms, in full respect for the rule of law and international law, to work to reduce the production, supply of and trafficking in illicit drugs and to fight trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling.

**9. The principle of mutual accountability between the Government of Afghanistan and its international development partners needs to be continued with any future government.** The principle of mutual accountability remains an essential element for effective support. The goal is to ensure respect for our common values and concluded agreements, including the Government's commitments towards sound macro-economic policies and public financial management. We stand ready to work on a new Mutual Accountability Framework, which will support key reforms and reinforce good governance, the respect for the rule of law and human rights, and safeguards for combating and preventing corruption. We also commit to adhering to aid effectiveness principles and to our obligations on communications and reporting to authorities.

**10. Safe and unhindered access for all humanitarian and development actors, free of any illegal taxes and levies on the assistance delivered.** This entails being able to reach and provide services, including state social services such as health and education, in all provinces and districts within the sovereign borders of Afghanistan, without interference or obstruction from any armed parties. Ensuring safety and security of aid workers is vital for the smooth implementation of donor's assistance on the ground.

The participants stand ready to meet with the parties to the Intra-Afghan Negotiations to discuss the scope, implementing mechanisms, and determining factors of their development and budgetary support. At the start of the peace talks, our common goal is to offer a lasting partnership with the Afghan people in support of a sovereign, democratic, unified and prosperous Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors.

The above key elements for sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan have been agreed by:

Australia

Canada

Denmark

Finland

Germany

Italy

Japan

The Netherlands

Norway

Sweden

The United Kingdom

The United States of America

The European Union