

CONCLUSIONS OF THE 29th TRIPARTITE COMMISSION MEETING

BETWEEN

THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLICS OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN AND UNHCR

Istanbul, Turkey

30 November 2017

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan hosted and chaired the 29th Tripartite Commission Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey on 30 November 2017. The meeting was attended by the delegations of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan and representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, represented by H.E. Lt. General Abdul Quadir Baloch, Minister of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), and UNHCR expressed their appreciation to the Government of Afghanistan for hosting and chairing the meeting.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNHCR appreciated the continuing generosity of the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for close to four decades.

All parties recognized the positive developments since the 28th Tripartite Commission meeting on 15 February 2017, including *inter alia* progress in the Government of Afghanistan's Displacement and Returnees Executive Committee (DiREC) Policy Framework and its Action Plan and the implementation of the Government of Pakistan's Comprehensive Policy on Voluntary Repatriation and Management of Afghan Nationals beyond 2015.

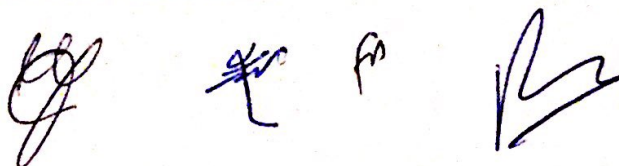
The Government of Afghanistan provided an update on developments in pursuit of solutions for returning refugees, including on the land allocation scheme and National Priority Programmes (NPP), in particular the Citizens' Charter. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan also updated on progress in the registration exercise to document undocumented Afghans in Pakistan; the Inter-Ministerial discussions on national refugee law and the implementation of a flexible visa regime for different categories of Afghan nationals in Pakistan as approved by the Federal Cabinet.

The parties discussed the emerging cooperation between humanitarian and development actors including recent developments towards partnerships with the World Bank Group in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Participants recognized the importance of the UNHCR and the World Bank partnership in Afghanistan for reintegration of returnees through community based protection measures which includes livelihood projects, and welcomed the recently signed joint data sharing agreement for comprehensive analysis on the return process and reintegration support for Afghan refugees.

The Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan renewed their calls on the UNHCR to consider increasing the repatriation cash grant to previous levels. Reference was also made to the need for increased resource mobilization in support of voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.

All parties reiterated their commitment to joint resource mobilization and lasting solutions to the protracted displacement situation of Afghan refugees for their sustainable return and reintegration in Afghanistan. All parties also affirmed their commitment to the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) for 2018-2019 and to continued dialogue to explore the relevance of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

The three parties committed to extend the existing Tripartite Agreement Governing the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Citizens living in Pakistan, currently valid until 31 December 2017, pending approval by the Federal Cabinet of the Government of Pakistan.




All three Parties to the Tripartite Agreement:

1. *Reaffirmed* their commitment to uphold the principles of voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity, under the Tripartite Agreement; and *encouraged* continued pursuit and implementation of lasting solutions for Afghan refugees preferably within the regional framework beyond December 2017;
2. *Emphasized* the importance of continuing close coordination of the gradual voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of Afghan refugees in light of the ongoing conflict and limited absorption capacity in Afghanistan;
3. *Appreciated* the progress achieved by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the development of the DiREC Policy Framework and Action Plan, and the inclusion of refugee returnees in the key National Priority Programmes;
4. *Expressed* the need to ensure concrete progress towards the inclusion of refugee returnees in tangible actions and outcomes of DiREC and the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), including access to civil documentation, adequate housing and land, basic services, livelihoods opportunities and participation in Community Development Councils (CDC);
5. *Stressed* the supporting role that UNHCR will continue to provide to the Government of Afghanistan and key provincial line departments in the implementation of the DiREC Policy Framework and Action Plan for the assistance and sustainable reintegration of refugee returnees.
6. *Expressed* appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for the adoption and progressive implementation of the Comprehensive Policy on Voluntary Repatriation and Management of Afghan Nationals and *underscored* UNHCR's continued support in its implementation.
7. *Encouraged* the extension of the validity of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards until 31 December 2018 for the continued protection of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, pending the ongoing review by the Federal Cabinet of the Government of Pakistan and based on mutual agreement; and *underlined* the importance of the PoR card as a foundational protection tool for the registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan until sustainable durable solutions are fully realized;
8. *Appreciated* the leadership by the Government of Pakistan in documenting the undocumented Afghan nationals in Pakistan and in the issuance of Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC); and *reaffirmed* support for a comprehensive, predictable and sustainable response to the cross-border population movements; and *called* for timely issuance of relevant documents, including passports, by the Government of Afghanistan.
9. *Underlined* the importance of enhanced coordination and cooperation of the Governments on border management issues, including the regularization of cross-border travel under a visa regime and the issuance of passports as soon as possible;
10. *Underscored* the importance of ensuring resilience measures for Afghan refugees, particularly women and youth, with enhanced support in education, health and livelihoods to empower and invest in the human capital of the future generation;
11. *Acknowledged* UNHCR's commitment to engage more closely in cross-border programming in Pakistan and Afghanistan for innovative approaches, particularly in the area of community-based protection measures and livelihoods, with a special focus on women and youth;

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12. *Reaffirmed* previous commitments to ensuring access to education for all Afghan refugee children in Pakistan and returnee children and youth in Afghanistan, including through effective technical cooperation on education related issues in the context of return; particularly on resolving academic equivalency certificates issues for returnee children and youth.
13. *Committed* to proactive joint resource mobilization with the international community for flexible, multi-year planning and funding which enables efficient and effective interventions in an evolving context;
14. *Noted* that proactive initiatives with development actors such as the Government-led Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme in Pakistan and the collaboration between UNHCR and the development actors in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have been critical steps forward to ensure the sustainability of voluntary repatriation, as well as provision of tangible support to host communities pending return; emphasizing that development intervention in this regard should not be substitutive.
15. *Reaffirmed* the commitment to engage closely with humanitarian and development actors to help foster an environment conducive to voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of returnees in Afghanistan; and to support refugees and their host communities in Pakistan, including through the RAHA programme and similar complementary initiatives.
16. *Reiterated* continued support for host communities in both protracted refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan and areas of high return in Afghanistan; and *committed* to seeking continued and sustained support for the host communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan through more predictable and equitable international responsibility-sharing mechanisms.
17. *Emphasized* the need for the implementation of the Conclusions of the previous Tripartite Commission meetings in line with the Governments' strategies and plans.

The Parties agreed that the 30th meeting of the Tripartite Commission will be hosted by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2018.



**For the Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan**

**Sayed Hussain Alemi
Balkhi**



**For the Islamic Republic
of Pakistan**

**Lt. General Abdul Qadir
Baloch**

**For the UN High Commissioner
for Refugees**



Afghanistan: Fathiaa Abdalla

Pakistan: Ruvendri Menikdiwela