

In the name of Allah
Demands of Afghanistan Civil Society on the occasion of
Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan – 08 July 2012

Kabul, Tuesday 02 July, 2012

Introduction

The Afghan Civil Society deem international support for Afghanistan that has consistently continued in the ten years important and greatly value international conferences on Afghanistan, specifically the Tokyo conference. The Afghan Civil Society, by keeping in view the development priorities of Afghanistan, include their collective demands and commitments in this paper as follows:

Afghan Civil Society that have more than four decades of experience in rendering services have built sufficient capacity in various areas including justice, defending the human rights, creating public awareness, humanitarian law, policy making, monitoring and evaluation, coordination and offering technical advices and assistance on different issues including development, democracy and peace. The Afghan Civil Society are committed to continue utilizing their capacity for the purpose of bringing transparency and accountability in national development programs and for supporting the process of peace, nation building and national solidarity.

The Afghan Civil Society believes that peace, security and good governance on which there has been much emphasize in 'Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan' are crucial for Afghanistan's long term stability and development as it has still a long way to go and face severe challenges. Governance has fallen weak due to rampant corruption, violation of human rights, weakness of democratic entities and lack of a working system that can serve Afghanistan like what its people expect and is accountable to the nation. With such a condition, there are severe concerns over successful implementation of the Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan as its foundations are still weak and the environment has not been made feasible to execution of development programs.

The Afghan Civil Society urge the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to strongly support human rights and democratic development of Afghanistan as bases for long-lasting peace, good governance and successful implementation of development projects. Therefore, amidst Afghan Civil Society support for Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan, and demand the followings:

Peace and Security

The Afghan Civil Society supports the peace process as a mechanism that can help national reconciliation and strengthen the pillars of democracy. From an external perspective the conflict has made Afghanistan look like a battle ground for the fight against terrorism and from an internal perspective misuse of religion, sectarian reactions, killing of civilians, political and economic monopoly, deep-rooted corruption, poverty and lack of basic services have constrained long-lasting peace and stability. Therefore:

- The international community must include the counterterrorism war in a regional political and military framework by adopting new policies.
- The Peace and Re-integration Program must be based on transparency, accountability, justice and must proceed by paying respect to an inclusive process that consider the rights of victims especially people with disabilities, widows and focus on methodologies that are religiously, nationally and internationally acceptable.

- Significant participation of civil society, women and youths in three areas of peace process – selection of agenda, execution of plans and decision making – are crucial to its success.
- The Afghan Civil Society can support the government in bringing peace and stability, registration of incidents of human rights violation and humanitarian law and making environmental feasible for national reconciliation. They commit to continue their support and urge the Government of Afghanistan to prepare a national strategy for supporting human rights and fighting ethnic, racial and linguistic prejudices.
- The Afghan Civil Society urge the Government of Afghanistan to re-consider initiation of transitional justice program and commit to implement the ‘transitional justice action plan.’ as well as call on the international community to support this process.

Good Governance

The basic reason behind failure against corruption are breaking of the laws by the lawmakers for saving political patch-ups and presence of corruption at all levels of administration and its direct link with mafias of power. Afghanistan’s judicial system from Supreme Court to low-level organizations has been under direct influence of political interference up to an extent that its independence has come under severe questions. Keeping in view the priorities of national building as an infrastructure for change, the Afghan Civil Society seek the attention of Afghan government and the international community to the following points:

- Implementation of Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan must initiate by bringing serious reforms to the government through good governance and fighting the corruption. At the Tokyo conference, the international community must set conditions for its financial support to cause Afghan government bring the required reforms. One of the conditions can be: the ratio of aids should be in accordance to reforms brought for good governance.
- For the fight against corruption firstly, a strong leadership and political well for bringing good governance and fighting corruption should be in place. Secondly, the government system must be prevented to go under the influence of mafia system. And thirdly, corrupt individuals should be trialed by an independent judiciary. Such steps will comprise the first measure to eliminate corruption and mafia system and will strengthen the rule of law.
- The international community in coordination with civil society organizations must pressurize the Government of Afghanistan so that independence of judiciary is respected by all branches of power.
- Development of formal judicial system so that it can replace all informal judicial systems that are against the human rights and democracy should be included in ‘Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan as program for judicial reforms.
- Establishment and development of modern and electronic administration systems, approval of access to information law and strong monitoring and evaluation of activities of international organizations in Afghanistan can lead to transparency and accountability.
- The international community must financially and technically support and monitor the 2014 Presidential election and other future elections and support preparation of a complete electoral law and in coordination with civil society organization ensure its implementation.
- The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must commit that all the international conventions and other international commitments of Afghanistan will be implemented. Regular reporting to concerned committees of conventions can be an index of improvement in fulfillment of commitments.
- As a commitment for women rights, the Government of Afghanistan must ensure that it will, in coordination with civil society organizations, review the laws with biased contents and speed up the process of implementation of the law ‘Elimination of Violence against Women.’ Special courts and

investigation offices for following up and resolving the cases of violation against women should be established in various parts of the country. Also, discrimination action of men toward women in all the courts of Afghanistan, especially in cases of violence against women and sexual harassment, should be eliminated.

- 'Human Rights Support Unit' should be delegated more authorities and it is recommended that the unit be included in the organizational structure of Office of Administrative Affairs or be made independent.
- The free and independent media, as the voice of civil society, supporter of democracy and defender of human rights, has played a crucial role in development of a democratic Afghanistan. The international community must continue its support for free and independent media.
- The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must take measures to support the rights of repatriates, internally displaced people and refugees, ensure their volunteer repatriation and honorable re-integration into Afghan society and prevent inhumane political practice against them.,
- The Afghan Civil Society are ready to play their role in enhancing accountability and transparency through comprehensive preparation of quarterly reports on all step of development programs – donor commitment, transfer of funds into Afghanistan, fund allocations and their outcomes.
- The Afghan Civil Society for the purpose of nation building will support the Government of Afghanistan in reviewing of the laws and human rights agreement that are in accordance with the constitution of Afghanistan. They support the Afghan government in approving Privacy Protection Act, Civil Responsibility Law, Consumer Support Law, Law for Prevention of Discrimination and Promotion of Tolerance.

Sustainable Development

Afghan Civil Society, by urging on the importance of the long-term impact of human and economic development, demands the followings from the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. :

1. Human Resources

- Recruitment of new generation, professionals and well-educated individuals in government organizations and promotion of the idea of 'right man for the right job' should be one of the main conditions of international aids to Afghan government.
- The Government of Afghanistan must work to bolster Afghans professionalism to develop various fields including electric power, national highways and water dams, mine and industries so that Afghanistan can be put on the track of self-sufficiency. The international community must provide scholarships to Afghan youth in different fields including education, public health, management etc and also assist Afghanistan in establishing universities according to international standards.

2. Private Sector

At current the private sector of Afghanistan is focused on the import of low-quality and health-hazard goods and lacks clear strategy for balancing the huge difference between imports and exports or encouragement of local production. In addition, it is feared that the encouragement of monopoly instead of perfect competition, breaking the laws through corruption and absence of a working monitoring system will double the problems of this sector. Therefore,

- The Government of Afghanistan, in coordination with Afghan Civil Society, must take serious measure for implementation consumer support policy.

- For the purpose of increasing the domestic revenue, the Government of Afghanistan must encourage growth of middle class populace and register the small and medium sized business. To encourage investment, laws and process must be made easier and more transparent.
- Development of infrastructures, rural areas and agriculture sector are pivotal to move Afghanistan towards self-reliance. At the same time, investment in water resources for generation of power and irrigation and prevention of their wastage must be under focus of international community and the Afghan government.
- The international community should also specify its commitments towards strengthening the framework for establishing accountability and transparency in the mining sector of Afghanistan.
- The Afghan Civil Society announces their support for development of infrastructures, construction highways, railways, and national program for energy and urban development. 'Strategic Perspective for Decade of Change and Self-reliance Afghanistan' should be era of self-sufficiency for Afghanistan in electric power and fuel.
- The Afghan Civil Society supports all environment friendly, fruitful and sustainable projects that are focused on equal development of all areas especially the regions that have been deprived of development projects and are executed through partnership with the local people. The international community and Afghanistan government, as two strategic partners, must put investments with long-lasting economical impacts in the list of priorities.
- Active participation of women and support for that must be included as an important index for social and economic development in the 'Strategic Perspective for Decade of Transformation and Self-reliance Afghanistan'. Women's participation in agricultural and production activities and their wages should be considered through reforms in labor laws.
- The Government of Afghanistan with assistance from the international community must work to conduct a national census and adopt its results as an important base for allocation development funds.
- The Afghan government and international community must take measures to eliminate the opium trade and fight corruption in counter-narcotics organizations so that drug trafficking can be countered at national, regional and international levels.
- The Afghan Civil Society urges the Afghan government to compete private firms for establishing balance in the market and benefiting the consumers.

International community's assistance to boost investment, balance the difference between imports and exports and identification of successful and profitable business will create job opportunities, strengthen the economy and improve the living standard of people. The Afghan Civil Society announces their full support in this regard.

Demands and Commitments of Afghan Civil Society for Transformation Decade Strategy and Self-reliance Afghanistan

The Afghan Civil Society is committed to establish a coordination framework among different entities and strengthen their coordinated efforts, extended partnership, accountability and transparency. Extension of civil society activities at provincial level is a working priority to Afghan Civil Society. Keeping in view the plans and projects that will be agreed upon in the Tokyo conference, the Afghan Civil Society commits to involve more organizations with resembling activities among them so that the process of monitoring and consultation turns more effective.

The Afghan Civil Society demands that a tripartite commitment by international community, Afghan government and civil society organizations must be in place for monitoring of and cooperation and establishment transparency for execution of development projects, improving rule of law and fighting against corruption. The Afghan Civil Society believes that such a measure, besides presentation of specific and long-term commitments of international community in Tokyo conference and their implementation are important for protection of economic, social and cultural rights of people of Afghanistan. Therefore, the international community must condition its assistance to Afghanistan based on the respect of Afghan government for democracy, human rights (with emphasize on women rights), its capability to maintain Afghans ten-year gains and its obedience to constitutional law of Afghanistan that supports independent civil society and free media.