



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Finance
Office of the DM for Policy
معینیت پالیسی

Concept Paper

2018 Ministerial Meeting on Afghanistan: 27 – 28 November 2018

Background

In 2011 at the Bonn conference on Afghanistan, the international community agreed on a “Transformation Decade” for the country. During this period, Afghanistan was promised more international assistance than countries at a similar stage of development, so that the country would achieve self-reliance by 2024. At the Tokyo Conference in 2012 a system of high-level periodic reviews was put in place with ministerial meetings (invitation to Foreign Ministers because of the comprehensive and political nature of the meetings) every two years and Senior Officials meeting in the intervening years. The ministerial meetings in 2012 (Tokyo) and 2016 (Brussels) became major pledging conferences obtaining over \$16 billion and \$15 billion respectively for the years which followed. The next major pledging conference is in 2020.

The Tokyo conference (2012) also introduced the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) as a means to provide direction for the development of Afghanistan through mutual commitments between the Government and the international community. A system of high level periodic reviews takes place via either the ministerial meeting or the Senior Officials meeting every year. The senior officials meetings are held in Kabul and the ministerial are held outside Afghanistan in order to garner continued political support from capitals. The London Ministerial of 2014, being the first ministerial to follow up on Tokyo which established this scheme, had been organized by the then Prime Minister Cameron and strongly reaffirmed the continued support of the international community as well as to scrutinize the implementation of the commitment of the Afghan government.

The ministerial meetings have gained special importance for Afghanistan’s development and reform agenda. These meetings energize the whole government to show results, commit to further reform and plan for the future, as well as enabling the international community to demonstrate continuing support, thereby reinforcing mutual confidence. These strategic discussions address Afghanistan’s development and reform at a political and strategic level, and are critical for the Government of Afghanistan and its partner nations and organizations.

In addition to being highly political and strategic, the Brussels Ministerial of 2016 was a pledging conference. The next ministerial meeting this year in 2018 will be more similar to London in terms of its significance. It will not be a pledging conference like those in Tokyo and Brussels but much more focused on policy and strategy. In line with the Security Council mandate for the UN to coordinate international donor assistance to Afghanistan, the UN has

been co-chairing ministerial and senior officials meetings. The Secretary-General has participated in all the ministerial meetings as the main participants along with Afghanistan and the host country.

Following the senior officials meeting held in Kabul on 5 October 2017 the Afghan Government (President Ghani and the Minister of Finance) asked the United Nations to hold the ministerial meeting of 2018 at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The idea for the UN to host the ministerial at the Palais des Nations has been welcomed all around, including by main donors including Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Importance of the 2018 ministerial meeting

The 2018 ministerial meeting will take place at an important juncture for Afghanistan. Parliamentary elections are to take place no later than the end of October 2018 and presidential elections are expected to be held in 2019. It would be an important occasion for the Afghan Government to highlight its commitment to democratic processes at the meeting. Should there be a lack of clarity surrounding the elections, the meeting would be an occasion for the international community to message the Afghan people. The ministerial meeting will also be an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the development and reform agenda and the need to advance it as a constructive contribution to peace and security. This particular meeting will also be crucial in measuring results against the \$15.2 billion committed in Brussels.

The ministerial meeting will be held between two pledging conferences: the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan (2016) and the next pledging conference expected to be held in 2020. Thus, this is a crucial moment for the government and international community to demonstrate progress, commitment and maintain the momentum in the implementation of the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework.

Proposal

This proposal is for the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations to co-host the 2018 ministerial at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, 27-28 November. The meeting would be co-chaired by the President of Afghanistan and the Secretary-General of the United Nations; after the opening segment, the Finance Minister and SRSG would co-chair the meeting. It is expected that delegations be headed either by Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Finance from some fifty countries engaged in Afghanistan. In the past, the United States Secretary of State and the foreign ministers of the neighboring countries participated in the ministerial meetings. Given the expected presence of such senior figures, there will of course be space in the margins of the ministerial for those in attendance to consult each other on a variety of issues. Side events on the afternoon of 27 November would complement the main event to take place on 28 November.

The goal of the meeting would be to show the solidarity of the international community with the Afghan people and the government in their efforts for peace and prosperity; and for the Afghan government to renew its commitment to development and reform. It would be an

occasion to highlight Afghanistan's continuing development despite fragility and insecurity. The occasion would also provide an opportunity to convey a message about the critical role of development to peace-building, and the international community's contribution in this regard.

Aims and objectives of the ministerial meeting

1. Showcase progress made by the National Unity Government (NUG) in the last four years to instill confidence amongst international partners and the people of Afghanistan;
2. Reiterate Afghanistan's commitment to reforms and the democratic process, and the international community's commitment to the development and prosperity of Afghanistan;
3. Present the refreshed Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF).

Cost

The total cost for 27-28 November is \$89,800. This includes: rooms at the Palais des Nations in Geneva; interpretation into six languages; three coffee breaks; one high-level lunch for eighty people (heads of delegation); one high-level dinner for eighty people (heads of delegation); one standard lunch for 320 people; and water throughout the meeting. The cost does not include travel or accommodation, which is to be assumed by each delegation. The Government of Afghanistan has stated its intention to cover its own costs.

Format of the meeting

The meeting is proposed to be divided into thematic side events on the afternoon of 27 November leading into the main event on 28 November. The main event would include an opening session with key addresses by the President of Afghanistan and the Secretary General of the United Nations; presentations on progress achieved by the NUG over the last four years including on the SMAF indicators and economic outlook; discussions of the most important development issues; and statements of participating countries and international organisations on their support to Afghanistan. The side events are to focus on themes such as development for peace, conflict-resolution and peace-building; regional economic cooperation; women's economic empowerment; anti-corruption; and the commitment to democratic values. The actual format and themes will be decided by the Afghan Government and the UN in collaboration with major donors.

Expected main outcomes

Final document in the form of "Geneva Declaration" or "Statement" would be sought. It would provide for the following outcome: For the Government of Afghanistan: Gain the continued confidence and support of the international community and of the Afghan people by presenting progress, and its commitment to reform, democratic processes and the development for its people. For the United Nations: Demonstrate its unflinching support and commitment to the development of Afghanistan, as a key contribution to the search for peace and security. For the international partners: Showcase solidarity with Afghanistan and demonstrate to respective domestic audiences that support is leading to results in Afghanistan. (End)