

From the London Conference on Afghanistan 2014 to the Senior Officials Meeting 2015

A Joint Statement

Afghan civil society must be a significant contributor to the Senior Officials Meeting

The London Conference on Afghanistan (LCA) in December 2014 provided Afghan civil society with a constructive opportunity to join the new Afghan Government and its international partners as they reaffirmed their commitments to peace and development in Afghanistan.

As Afghanistan enters into the Transformation Decade (2015-2024), we, the signatories of this statement, recognise that the development, rights and economic achievements of the last fourteen years will still require concerted Afghan and international effort if they are to be preserved and extended. We recognise the commitments made by the President and the Chief Executive Officer of the National Unity Government; we welcome the references made to good governance, rooting out¹ corruption and providing effective justice and we request that measures be taken accordingly.

We endorse the reaffirmation of the commitment made by the International Community to sustain financial and technical support to Afghanistan through 2017 'at or near the levels of the past decade'².

We maintain that the deliberations on refreshing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) planned for the next Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the definition of the joint objectives for the Transformation Decade will only be truly effective if they are debated by all development actors, including civil society. We therefore urge the Afghan Government and its international partners to translate the commitments they made at the LCA into concrete action.

If the views discussed at the SOM are to be representative of those of the Afghan population, it will be essential that a rigorous and robust consultation process is undertaken both in Kabul and at the sub-national level. We value civil society's post-LCA engagements with the Afghan Government, and the Government's commitment to involve provincial civil society organisations in development reporting and planning and we encourage them to continue these efforts. Civil society organisations across Afghanistan will be able to give valuable input into the process, on condition that they are informed and consulted in advance about the documents that will constitute the refreshed TMAF. These documents will include but will not be limited to the Government's *Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership*, National Priority Programmes, and the Citizen's Charter of Fundamental Economic Rights. This process will undoubtedly require the financial and technical support of donors.

We welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to take 'demonstrated actions'³ before the SOM, such as those to improve human rights. We believe these actions should include an improvement in the effectiveness and independence of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Delivering on the promises it made, the Afghan Government should also ensure gender equity in the Cabinet and the High Council of the Supreme Court.

We request that information about the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan, the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security and of the Elimination of Violence against Women Law is shared with the wider public and the corresponding implementation plans are given a prominent place in the core agenda of the Senior Officials Meeting.

We also welcome the call for 'aid effectiveness'⁴ in the communiqué with its emphasis on Afghan capabilities and the acknowledgement of the role of international NGOs in humanitarian and development assistance. We urge the

¹ Paragraph 11, London Conference on Afghanistan Communiqué 4th December 2014

² Paragraph 4, op. cit.

³ Paragraph 16, op.cit.

⁴ Paragraph 22, op.cit.

Afghan Government to collaborate with international NGOs in improving the quality and delivery of public services in line with national policies.

Recognising that the LCA reaffirmed that ‘security is a prerequisite for Afghanistan’s continued development⁵’ and acknowledging the unacceptable toll on the civilian population of Afghanistan, and the increasing violence against aid workers, human rights defenders and media personnel in the last year, we urge all parties to the conflict to protect civilians as their first priority and to ensure the access to and safety of public services and the security of their staff.

In conclusion, we reiterate that civil society can only play its rightful and meaningful role if its actors play an integral part in the SOM, from setting the agenda to monitoring its outcomes.



Afghan Civil Society Forum



Civil Society Support Center



Transitional Justice Coordination Group



⁵ Paragraph 24, op.cit.