

## Annex 1:

### **Key Messages of Civil Society for the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Meeting on 9 July 2017**

1. As the representatives of the Civil Society Working Committee set up for the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to share the views and recommendations of civil society representatives. We civil society representatives, appreciate the support and help of the international community to the Afghan people in seeking sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan for the past 16 years. The Afghan people wholeheartedly support a system that promotes a democratic nation and state-building. The last decade of democracy has laid the foundation for greater co-existence amongst Afghans. Despite the challenges, this democratic system has led to an increased exercise of civil and political rights through elections, freedom of speech and media, economic growth, and the active participation of all groups in Afghan society, particularly women and the youth.

2. We welcome the commitments made during Brussels Conference on Afghanistan (BCA) in October 2016 which includes continuation of support to Afghanistan for the coming four years. However, the commitments made at the BCA were very limited in terms of governance and anti-corruption, as some civil society organizations have noted. Today, we would like share with you that a systematic follow-up mechanism by civil society post-BCA has been set up. The Civil Society Working Committee (CSWC) is composed of 13 networks and civil society organizations that joined together to prepare for the BCA. The CSWC has now established six sub-committees, composed of 70 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and 13 networks, and formulated terms of reference, an action plan and a structured follow-up mechanism. As agreed by CSOs, these subcommittees are monitoring priority indicators in the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), such as the appointments of senior officials in security sectors. Based on the findings of CSWC members, the level of implementation of the SMAF indicators has varied. We can see that the National Unity Government (NUG) has initiated some steps on these commitments. While some of them, such as the National Action Plan 1325, have shown progress in terms of budget allocation, those commitments related to the elections and anti-corruption lack significant progress. Insecurity, lack of financial and professional human resources, poor coordination among the concerned governmental entities and international community, corruption, lack of political will and minimal cooperation with and understanding of the role of civil society are among the remaining challenges towards achieving these commitments.

3. Unfortunately, there is increased insecurity in Kabul and most of the provinces, where people cannot walk safely around the city after 9:00 pm at night. There is an urgent need for the security sector, including district police and intelligence, to take serious and practical measures to address these shortcomings. **One of the main tasks of government is to provide protection for its citizens.** According to the Afghan Constitution, organizing a peaceful demonstration is one of the fundamental rights of citizens. To build trust between the people and the government, the government is required to share with its people the exact information about the factual details of recent attacks in Kabul. The government should ensure the security and safety of the people and, in the meantime, should regularly keep the public informed in this respect. The government

must identify the perpetrators of the shooting of the demonstrators, which led to casualties of several protestors. **Afghan CSOs working on police integrity and transparency calls for a comprehensive reform within the police in Kabul and across the country. CSOs call upon the government to come up with a plan and timeline on how the NUG would reform the police to provide security for citizens.**

4. Corruption is a threat to the national security of Afghanistan. We would like to call upon the government and the international community to allocate proportionate resources and show a strong action against this menace. We appreciate the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC) and see this as an example of the government's willingness to fight corruption and evidence that fighting corruption is possible in Afghanistan in spite of the ongoing insurgency. However, the efforts by the NUG and the international community to prevent and fight corruption until now have been insufficient. **We call upon the government to ensure the independence of the ACJC through the establishment of an independent anti-corruption commission that the NUG committed to at the London Conference on Afghanistan. We further call upon the Afghan government to outline an exit strategy of the National Procurement Authority/National Procurement Commission from the Administrative Office of the President and outline the plan and timeline for establishment of an independent National Procurement Commission.** Until independent agencies are established, civil society representatives should be invited to observe the activities of the National Procurement Commission and the High Council on Rule of Law, Governance and Anti-Corruption.

5. Unemployment, poverty, corruption and bullying are the main factors that cause violence in the country. One of the ways to prevent the spread of violence and insecurity is to address employment of youth, improve living conditions of communities, and ensure implementation of rule of law in all parts of the country. The number of unemployed is increasing day by day. In filling 400 vacant posts in the Department of Electronic ID (Tazkera) in the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, 25,000 people have applied; an indication of the high unemployment situation in the country. We hope that **the NUG will take these issues seriously and introduce further practical actions towards sustainable development in the country and job creation for the youth.** We urge the Government to implement a self-reliance strategy to ensure that both male and female citizens benefit equally from job opportunities, and that public investment increases in girls' education and women's literacy programs as well as creation and provision of job opportunities to empower women and other marginalized groups.

6. The people of Afghanistan request the government to ensure that all reforms will benefit the people and strengthen the rule of law and democratic values. We believe that any changes to the system must go through constitutional and democratic procedures. For the sake of implementing and maintaining the values of democracy, we the citizens, during the most difficult circumstances, have participated actively in elections. **We call on the government to conduct free, fair and inclusive parliamentary elections across the country to resolve many of the existing problems.** With regard to electoral reforms, civil society has already submitted its policy recommendations to the President. We request the implementation of a Presidential Decree, based on the Article 16 Item 5 of the Election Law, to dismiss the commissioners who

violated the Election law, and to carry out a clear and transparent process for recruitment of the permanent staff of Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC), including hiring of qualified women at decision-making level positions of the IEC, and preparation for voter lists of all polling stations.

7. In bringing reforms and rule of law, it is required that **the dialogue between civil society and government should be increased and become more serious**. Civil society is more aware of the needs, demands and expectations of the people and can be a bridge between the people and the government. Unfortunately, there are various constraints and blockages between civil society and the Palace, where individuals and structures are avoiding dialogue as well as better coordination among the government and the civil society. **We ask the Government to establish a mechanism for real interaction between the people and government to regularly hear the demands of the people**. We request the government to adopt a principled approach to this partnership, with information sharing, consultation and engagement in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programs.

8. The Afghan civil society is not happy with the international community's policy towards refugees. The Afghan people, including those who fled the ongoing war, should be treated with dignity. Furthermore, civil society is not satisfied with the aid transparency of the international community. We call for engagement of the civil society and people in the programme design and oversight of the large aid programs in the country. The Afghan people see that there is lack of coordination and difference in interests among representatives of the international community. **We would like to call upon our international partners to draw up coordinated efforts through a joint policy for Afghanistan**. While we appreciate the efforts of the international community in the country, **we would like to draw their attention to support the Afghan people and the government in more sustainable programs, in higher education, modern agriculture, urban development and large national projects among others**.

9. Afghan civil society will continue to monitor the commitments of the government and the international community to reflect on their implementation, impact and accountability. This will be done in close collaboration with the government and other relevant actors. Civil society will have a crucial role in reaching out to people in remote areas and in reflecting the voice of the citizens in the planning, implementation, as well as monitoring of development efforts towards achieving good governance, anti-corruption, and human rights in Afghanistan. The membership of Afghanistan in the global Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the implementation of the Access to Information Law would be opportunities to monitor these commitments through an enhanced partnership between the government and civil society, and increased civic space. Therefore, **we urge that all parties should continue to make efforts in their commitments**, while creating a monitoring mechanism that enables civil society to participate widely in cities and in rural and remote areas.

*Thank you*