

CONCLUSIONS OF THE 25th TRIPARTITE COMMISSION MEETING

Islamabad, Pakistan

11 March 2015

The 25th Tripartite Commission meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 11 March 2015. The meeting was hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and attended by delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, represented by H.E. Sayed Hossain Alemi Balkhi, Minister of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR), and UNHCR expressed their appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the 25th meeting of the Tripartite Commission and for Pakistan's continued goodwill and generosity in hosting Afghan refugees for over three decades.

Both Governments expressed their appreciation to UNHCR for its support and commitment in alleviating the plight of refugees.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, represented by H.E. Lt. Gen. (Retired) Abdul Qadir Baloch, Minister for States and Frontier Regions, congratulated the Afghan delegation on the formation of the National Unity Government and applauded the commitment and plans of the Government to facilitate sustainable return and reintegration of Afghan refugees from Pakistan.

All three parties to the Tripartite Agreement:

Reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity, to end the protracted Afghan refugee situation and urged that intensified efforts should be undertaken to create an enabling environment for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration;

Acknowledged that full and effective reintegration will be a gradual and challenging endeavour, linked to Afghanistan's overall absorption capacity, and *welcomed* the commitment and plans of the Government of Afghanistan to facilitate sustainable returns;

Underlined the importance of ensuring the inclusion of returnees into the new reform agenda of Afghanistan, its social policy and development processes at local, provincial and national/sector levels; inter alia by facilitating their access to National Priority Programs, National Solidarity Program, growth and job creation plans, as well as by prioritizing community-based (bottom-up) investments benefiting both returnees and local communities in areas of return;

Recognized the need for concrete measures to support this process, including by empowering returnees at an individual level by strengthening their coping mechanisms and self-reliance throughout the initial return and reintegration period;

Agreed to complement the return cash grant of USD 200 per individual (average of USD 1,200 per family of 6), currently provided to Afghan refugees under the auspices of UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme, with the inclusion of an additional multi-purpose long-term

reintegration component; through the introduction of the Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package (EVRRP) for a pilot period of one year;

Underlined that while the provision of the EVRRP can help stimulate voluntary return and support its recipients to cope during the initial stages of the return and reintegration process, the package is only complementary to comprehensive efforts, aimed at creating long-term incentives for durable return and conditions conducive for sustainable reintegration, underpinned by robust development initiatives, within the overall objective of bolstering the absorption capacity;

Committed to participate in pro-active joint fundraising, within the framework of the Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy, led by the Government of Afghanistan, supported by the Government of Pakistan and facilitated by UNHCR to ensure the mobilization of resources needed for the implementation of EVRRP. Parties agreed to engage both traditional and non-traditional donors. The Engagement of the GCC donors will be pro-actively explored as a first step in this joint resource mobilization process.

Agreed to jointly explore modalities for facilitated group return and to enhance mass information campaigns in both Pakistan and Afghanistan in support of voluntary repatriation and reintegration;

Reaffirmed their commitment to uphold the letter and spirit of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), as a regional framework allowing for harmonization and alignment of national plans and policies pertaining to solutions for refugees;

Agreed that the SSAR country portfolios of projects, that serve as the principal fund-raising tools, shall be adapted, as appropriate, so as to adequately reflect the changing circumstances and resource requirements, such as those related to the implementation of the Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package and complementary development initiatives to be carried out by relevant line ministries and other stakeholders;

Noted that Afghans outside Afghanistan, particularly the youth and women, constitute an untapped human capital integral to the nation-building, reconstruction and reconciliation processes in Afghanistan. In this regard, *recognized* the need to further strengthen cross-border initiatives aimed at youth and women empowerment, through education, vocational skills training and livelihoods; within the framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR);

Underscored the need to continue providing enhanced assistance to host communities and in this regard the importance of expanding the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme; devising joint resource mobilization strategies; making process of the programme more efficient, effective and transparent and undertaking pro-active initiatives to increase the visibility of the programme and its impact;

Underlined the importance of third country resettlement as a tool of international responsibility sharing for the most vulnerable refugees who cannot be expected to repatriate or to remain in Pakistan;

Agreed to document undocumented Afghans in Pakistan for the purpose of identity, in a comprehensive database that will be shared with the Government of Afghanistan, followed by

issuance of necessary travel documents by the Government of Afghanistan within a mutually agreed timeframe. A committee has been established, with members of the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, to develop the technical modalities at the earliest to commence the process.

Noted that temporary stay arrangements for employment, study and business purposes may be implemented for a residual population of refugees, while continuing protection of refugees in accordance with the international norms;

Underscored the importance of the Tripartite Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and UNHCR, as a multilateral platform for pursuing solutions for Afghan refugees;

Agreed that the two governments and UNHCR will intensely engage in consultation to devise a comprehensive plan with realistic timelines for the way forward and voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland. The policy will be finalized by mid-year, latest by August 2015, envisaging voluntary returns based on the absorption capacity of Afghanistan and the realities on the ground, in a mutually agreed phased manner. The extension of the Tripartite Agreement and the validity of the PoR cards would also form an integral part of this policy to avoid uncertainty towards the end of the year.

Affirmed their deep commitment to implementing lasting solutions that bring about a dignified closure to this protracted refugee situation and positively contribute to regional peace, stability, security and development. Towards this end, the parties reaffirmed their readiness to intensify their cooperation to pursue forward-looking policies and complement their collective efforts to implement the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, the Government of Pakistan's national policy on Afghan refugees and the Government of Afghanistan's reintegration strategies. It was encouraging to note that some 8,000 Afghan refugees have voluntarily repatriated during January and February 2015. It was hoped that the voluntary repatriation would be enhanced during the year.

The Parties agreed that the 26th meeting of the Tripartite Commission will be hosted by the Government of Afghanistan and held in Kabul by August 2015.



**For the
Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan**

**For the
Islamic Republic
of Pakistan**

**For the
United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees**

*Done on 11 March 2015
Islamabad, Pakistan*