

Highlights of Mr. Saber Azam's Speech during RECCA-V

- Excellencies
- Mr. Hamrokhan Zarifi, FM of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, FM of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Distinguished Heads of Delegations, ladies and gentlemen
- Allow me to thank the GoT and more specifically H.E. President Emomali Rahmon , not only for hosting RECAA-V, but also for the excellent arrangements made for the Nawroz festivities
- The festivities were demonstrative of the very strong cultural heritage enjoyed by the people of this part of the world
- Such events draw the people to celebrate together and, at the same time seek common grounds and solutions to challenges that they confront
- UNHCR welcomes the convening of RECCA-V in the beautiful city of Dushanbe which brings all stakeholders around the same table to find ways to efficiently help Afghanistan.
- We hope that the event here will result into tangible decisions and commitments to alleviate the sufferings of the Afghan people.
- Mr Chairman
- Development without peace and stability cannot be obtained. This principle is true, not only in the context of Afghanistan, but of the region as a whole
- Peace and prosperity in Afghanistan should, therefore, be regarded as an integral part of peace and prosperity in the region
- For its part, UNHCR is committed to play its own role and fulfill its obligations to persons who fall under its mandate

- Asylum seekers, refugees, forcibly displaced persons, stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness are indeed persons of concern to UNHCR
- In Afghanistan, the challenge of re-integrating returnees who had been in exile for years is extra-ordinary.
- Return of refugees to their homeland is just the beginning of a success, demonstrating that peace and prosperity in the country of origin is at the horizon.
- However, they need to be fully engaged within the political, social and economic structures of their country. Political will of the country of origin and strong support by the International Community are important success factors.
- Failure to do so successfully, leads to further frustration, thus, increasing tension in the already fragile society
- At the same time, possibilities of local integration should be offered to those who decide not to return and stay in the countries of asylum
- Refugees are not burdens; they are valuable assets who can contribute to the prosperity of societies in which they live
- Mindful of the challenges, UNHCR, together with the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is organizing a stakeholders' conference in Switzerland at the beginning of May this year.
- This presents an excellent opportunity to focus on the specific situation of refugees in Iran and Pakistan as well as on the plight of returnees in Afghanistan.
- We hope that governments and organizations present here today will attend as its success depends on their participation.
- Mr Chairman
- We are also of the opinion that identification and documentation of the population are the essential fundamentals of access to all rights for citizens.

- For they constitute the basis for reduction and prevention of statelessness, an issue which becomes a growing concern in the region.
- They are also important factors for meaningful development and national security of states.
- It may seem a luxury to suggest proper documentation of all citizens in Afghanistan, particularly the new born, as the country already confronts more challenging concerns.
- But, we must find a solution as the absence of it would lead to marginalization of a significant range of the population.
- I am confident that traditional methods of registration would serve as a basis.
- Mindful of asylum, refugee and statelessness challenges in the Muslim world in general, but more specifically in the region, UNHCR, the OIC and the Turkmen Government with the blessing of the Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, Kazakhstan, propose a ministerial conference on refugees and stateless persons in the Muslim World.
- This event will happen in the beautiful city of Ashgabat on 10 and 11 of May 2012. Foreign Ministers of member states of the OIC and major partner countries, including 5 permanent members of the SC as well as a number of other stakeholders have been invited.
- This ministerial conference is based on resolution 15/10-P(IS), agreed upon during the tenth summit of the Heads of States of the Islamic countries in 2003 in Malaysia. It will be a golden opportunity to review at policy makers level the issue of Afghan refugees and returnees in the region.
- It will also allow participants to seek how to prevent and reduce statelessness based on an excellent practice undertaken by the Government of Turkmenistan which led to finding concrete solutions for thousands of undocumented persons.
- I would like to conclude,

- Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen
- by thanking again the Government and people of Tajikistan for the excellent organization of this important conference.
- And hope that its outcomes will lead to fruitful and concrete actions.
- Thank you for your attention