

CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE QUADRIPARTITE STEERING COMMITTEE

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries

Istanbul, Turkey

1 December 2017

The fifth meeting of the Quadripartite Steering Committee chaired by the Government of Afghanistan was held in Istanbul, Turkey on 1 December 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss developments in the implementation of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) to Support Voluntary Repatriation and Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries, and to endorse the framework for SSAR for 2018-2019.

The Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were present at the meeting. Hon. Sayed Hussain Alemi Balkhi, Minister of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) represented Afghanistan; Hon. Abdul Quadir Baloch, Minister of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) represented the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Hon. Hossein Zolfaghari, Deputy Minister of Interior for Security and Disciplinary Affairs, represented the Islamic Republic of Iran; and Indrika Ratwatte, Regional Bureau Director for Asia and the Pacific represented UNHCR.

All parties expressed appreciation to the Government of Afghanistan for hosting and chairing the meeting. The Government of Afghanistan appreciated the commitment and continued support extended by the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan to Afghan refugees for almost four decades.

Participants reaffirmed the significance and relevance of the SSAR to identify and implement lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region. All parties agreed to continue to support the voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity of Afghan refugees under the SSAR framework beyond 2017, particularly by enhancing self-reliance and promoting peaceful co-existence of Afghan refugees and their host communities, and advocating for greater, more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing by the international community.

UNHCR suggests that the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan consider the adoption of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

The parties of the Quadripartite Steering Committee:

Reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity; and *urged* enhanced joint efforts to create an environment conducive to voluntary and gradual return and sustainable reintegration inside Afghanistan, as well as to continue to support host communities in Iran and Pakistan, under the SSAR framework;

Appreciated the goodwill of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan for providing continued protection to Afghan refugees for almost four decades; and *acknowledged* the generous hospitality and inclusive approaches of the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan enabling refugees access to national services, particularly health and education;

Reaffirmed that the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan would continue providing protection and access to services for Afghan refugees as a temporary measure until safe and dignified return to Afghanistan can be ensured;

The Governments of Afghanistan and Iran and UNHCR *agreed* to the extension of the SSAR framework for 2018-2019, that has successfully served as an enabling multilateral platform for consensus-building and engaging new actors to jointly plan and implement a comprehensive and integrated response towards lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region. In alignment with the National Peace Development Framework in Afghanistan (ANPDF), the extended strategy will build on achievements to date through scaling-up development interventions bringing tangible benefits for communities in

refugee and returnee populated areas and called for enhanced responsibility sharing by the international community;

The Government of Pakistan committed to present the proposed SSAR framework for 2018-2019 to its federal cabinet for consideration;

Appreciated the progress by the Government of Afghanistan through the establishment of the Displacement and Returnees Executive Committee (DiREC) and the development of the Policy Framework and its Action Plan; as well as the inclusion of refugee returnees in the National Priority Programmes, including the Citizens' Charter; and *called for* continued implementation of the action plan; and welcomed concrete steps taken to revise the Presidential Decree 104 on land distribution to eligible returnees and IDPs; *Appreciated* regular updates from the Government of Afghanistan on the progress;

The two host governments and UNHCR *appreciated* the efforts by the Government of Afghanistan to provide national documentation to undocumented Afghans identified by the host countries; and *call* upon the Afghan Government to expedite the issuance of national documents through its respective embassies;

Acknowledged the challenges to create conducive conditions for sustainable return and reintegration of refugee returnees to Afghanistan, in light of the country's limited absorption capacity, overall development and security context;

Stressed the special protection needs of returnee children and youth, who constitute more than half of the Afghan refugee population, particularly through ensuring access to civil documentation; and *appreciated* the provision of access to education and health in host countries; and *committed* to working together to ensure the smooth enrolment of children and youth in education programmes upon their return to Afghanistan;

Welcomed UNHCR's programme for Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) as well as community-based protection measures, including livelihoods initiatives in high return areas in Afghanistan, recognising the importance of strengthening the self-reliance and resilience of women and youth; and *agreed to* strengthen cross-border coordination and programming for these initiatives, including through education, vocational skills training, and enhanced market and livelihoods opportunities to build the Afghan refugee capital in Iran and Pakistan to prepare for their eventual return;

Acknowledged the need to extend the inclusion of returnees into key National Priority Programmes and related development initiatives to ensure sustainable re-integration of all returnees; and *recognized* the constructive partnerships established with development actors such as the World Bank Group in the region; and *emphasized* the commitment to strengthen existing partnerships with humanitarian and development actors, to foster synergies and complementarity in supporting lasting solutions; within the framework of the SSAR;

Committed to enhanced resource mobilisation efforts and innovative advocacy, including through showcasing initiatives within the framework of the SSAR Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy (JRMS); and *underlined* the importance of greater responsibility-sharing for the sustained support of the international community in supporting resilience-building measures and working towards lasting solutions for Afghan refugees and returnees, and their host communities; and

Reaffirmed the cooperation between Afghanistan and the host countries to secure solutions for Afghan refugees, including through the established Quadripartite and Tripartite frameworks.

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