



Achieving Peace: The Next Chapter in the Afghan-led Peace Process

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Geneva November 28, 2018

Owning the Peace

Tragedy is a daily occurrence in our lives. Each week, we lose on average one hundred Afghans, from all walks of life. The scale of violence inflicted on us is tragic.

How have Afghans reacted to this tragedy? With despair and hopelessness? No, instead, with powerful conviction and a true sense of urgency to seek an enduring and inclusive peace. Not the type of peace that comes from signing a piece of paper, but the type of peace that will enable us to address the deep roots of our inherited problems from four decades of conflict.

Let me differentiate between a false sense of urgency and a true sense of urgency. False urgency consists of hurried actions without direction, often organized around political timelines, boxes ticked without coherence—this is a dangerous and superficial path to short-term peace that we must steer clear of.

A true sense of urgency means we are laser-focused on what lasting peace requires. True urgency allows us to focus on the critical issues, to define and own our problems, and to draw on our past and the experiences of other societies. It requires careful consideration of each aspect of peace-making, but also the courage to take risks and the assumption of responsibility for leading peace efforts.

The result of this thought process is the creation of a roadmap for a process and programs that foster stability, security and inclusive growth atop the foundation of a democratic society.

The government of national unity is driven by a sense of true urgency for peace in our society. We have had this for years now, and we have already laid some critical groundwork for sustainable peace over the past five years. Our peace offering of February 28, 2018, for example, was derived from this sense of urgency. We made this offer without precondition.

Through this offer, we sought a peace agreement in which the Taliban would be included in a democratic and inclusive society, respecting the following tenets:

1. The Constitutional rights and obligations, of all citizens, especially women, are ensured.
2. The Constitution is accepted, or amendments proposed through the constitutional provision.
3. The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and civil service function according to law.
4. No armed groups with ties to transnational terrorist networks or transnational criminal organizations, or with ties to state/non-state actors, seeking influence in Afghanistan will be allowed to join the political process.

Achieving these end goals clearly requires a sovereign and independent Afghanistan. We must not sacrifice sustainable peace to achieving short-term objectives, which would ultimately result in a renewal of old conflicts—this time on a larger scale—and which would condemn the current and future generations of Afghans to misery and destruction. We must end this conflict now, but once and for all.

Our framing for the peace process which I have just elaborated on has been renewed and refined through intensive consultations since February 2018, particularly in the weeks leading to the Geneva Conference.

Over the past eight months, I have consulted extensively with a wide variety of different groups of Afghans from across the country—women, youth, rural and urban dwelling citizens, civil society, current and former political elite and leaders. Each group shares a unique and important perspective, but the common threads resulting from these consultations is a strong renewal of:

1. Consensus on the credibility and importance of the 2004 Constitution
2. The necessity of our foundational partnership with the international community, **and**
3. That the Afghan government and society must lead and own the peace process.

The consultations have also resulted in expressions of strong fears. Many of those fears are regarding some ideas that have been floating around in the media: for example, a departure from the constitution through ill-thought arrangements, such as the proposal of an interim administration; the sacrifice of the rights of citizens in general, and women in particular; and the international community's impending abandonment of this generation of young Afghans, which I believe will prove itself to be the greatest and most consequential generation in our contemporary history.

I have listened to these fears and hopes, which has proven to me over and over again that Afghans fully understand peace and what it requires. Afghans are emotionally and mentally prepared now to overcome the past and own the future. And it has further

strengthened my resolve and this government's resolve to firmly own and lead the peace process.

That said, our society does have a strong desire for the international community to play a constructive role. This also includes Arab Islamic countries, our regional neighbors and international organizations.

As we work together in this pursuit of lasting peace, we must not repeat the experience of 1992, where instead of stability and security, we were engulfed in massive conflict resulting in the destruction of our human, social and economic capital. Afghans will not become refugees again. We will not allow the gains to be lost through lack of focus and hotheadedness. We are determined to have clarity of vision, focused direction, and deliberate action to voice, represent and safeguard the sacrifices of our national defense and security forces and deliver on the hopes and aspirations of our people.

Leading the Peace

I will now turn to how we are leading the peace process and where we are right now in this process.

Our vision for peace is guided by Allah's commandment, which was revealed in the Holy Quran (41:34):

"The good and the evil deed are not equal. Repel the evil deed with one which is better; then he, between whom and you there was enmity, will become as though a loyal, protecting friend."

The Kabul process embodies this vision into distinctive lines of efforts, resulting in a comprehensive program of action. In February, we identified six areas for peace and stability. Let me provide an overview of the efforts in each area:

1. We coordinated unprecedented international and diplomatic support of the peace offer to the Taliban during Eid-al-Fitr this year. The NATO Summit this year in July was a ringing endorsement of our peace offer and the June cease-fire. We thank all of our international partners, particularly the United States, for systematically supporting the Kabul Process. We also thank all of you today for making peace an integral part of a conference that was first designed to take stock of mutual commitment in the development arena. I would also like to

recognize and thank China, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and India for their efforts on multiple levels—bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral—to engage in a constructive dialogue on peace efforts.

2. We thank Uzbekistan for convening the Tashkent Conference to align various efforts by countries and regional organizations with the Kabul Process. Tashkent provided a model that flows from the international principle of equality of sovereign states, as the meeting was jointly prepared by the Afghan government and co-chaired by Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Adherence to the principle of sovereignty and respect for the ownership and leadership of Afghanistan is crucial to ensuring the stability, security and prosperity of Afghanistan in the region.
3. We are pleased to acknowledge the close cooperation and consensus of the global Islamic community to counter the use of religious text as justification of unrestricted war. We thank the government and the Ulema of Indonesia for convening and hosting a gathering of Afghan, Pakistani and Indonesian scholars in Jakarta on May this year, where false and misguided notions of violence against civilians and the use of suicide bombings were explicitly declared as “against the holy principles of Islam.” We also thank the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The religious justification for conflict has been stripped of validity by the conference of Ulema in Indonesia, the OIC gathering of prominent muftis from across the Muslim world, by the passionate addresses of imams in the Holy cities of Makkah and Madina and by prominent supporters of His Highness King Salman Ibn Abdulazziz Al-Saud, the custodian of the holy shrines. What we have achieved today, from an Islamic perspective, is consensus. Those pariahs in the Islamic world have since emerged—radical terrorists wrongly claiming to be engaged in Islamic jihad, and their state sponsors.
4. We asked for a concerted global effort to persuade Pakistan to engage in a comprehensive state-to-state dialogue and to support the peace offer to the Taliban. That global effort is now in place. On paper, state to state discussions have resulted in an agreement, the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Reconciliation. Progress on the ground, however, is negligible. Movement from agreement to action is lacking from Pakistan.
5. and The fifth and sixth elements are our requests for support in the implementation of the peace agreement, and support of peace building initiatives, through trade, transit and investment, as well as support of our government reform agenda and anti-corruption strategy in the build up to the forthcoming 2019 presidential elections.

We are pleased to acknowledge that a constructive dialogue is in place, as manifested in this conference.

Moving forward to build upon the work we have already done, we argue that realization of our vision requires compassion, conviction and courage in dealing with the Taliban.

The June 2018 Eid-al-Fitr ceasefire showed the conviction of the Ulema, the courage of the government and security forces and the compassion of our people.

An unprecedented gathering of 2,906 Afghan Islamic scholars issued a unified fatwa—a declaration restating the commandment of Allah of the necessity of peace, and the tenants of Islamic principles and sharia law on the rejection of violence as a method of resolving disputes between Muslims. The Ulema urged the government and the Taliban to declare a ceasefire.

The government was propelled by our sense of true urgency to muster courage and conviction — within four days of the Ulema’s meeting, we called for a ceasefire.

The logic of the Ulema was so compelling that the Taliban responded positively and accepted the ceasefire and complied, except for a few small isolated incidents.

The compassion shown by Afghan citizens was truly impressive—what happened completely changed the political landscape, it challenged our conceptions of ourselves, and it altered the possibilities for our future. Over 30,000 Taliban fighters, mostly young people, came to the cities and joined in intense dialogue with their fellow citizens, conversing with members of armed forces, engaging in dialogue with women activists, praying in mosques with their fellow Muslims, and breaking bread with government officials and citizens from all walks of life in local halls across the country. After 39 years, Afghan children had a true holiday where they could go out, play and visit with friends and relatives.

Three things stand out about the ceasefire.

1. Despite the loss of nearly 1,000 lives in the week before the ceasefire, Afghan society reinforced its firm commitment to compassion and the need to move forward, not look back.
2. Contrary to assertions that Taliban fighters will never accept peace, young Taliban fighters that day repeatedly asserted that they are sick and tired of violence.
3. Our security forces displayed steadfast courage and heroism, both before and after the ceasefire. They proved that they are true guardians of Afghanistan’s

stability and security and firmly committed to following the lead of their elected leader.

Let me elaborate now on our National Defense and Security Forces.

Their sacrifice is inspiring strong patriotism in this nation. As commander in chief, I could not be more proud of our defense and security forces. In the past four years, the security forces have moved from being once referred to as a mercenary force by past leaders, to being the most trusted government institution in the nation. Afghans are full of pride for them.

On the January 1, 2015, the Afghan national security forces assumed with pride the full responsibility for our freedom and global security, here on the frontlines of the war on terror. Since then, the international losses have been 59 armed forces, while their total losses from 2001 to 2014 was 3,458. But since January 2015, we Afghans have lost a staggering 28,529 of our Afghan sons and daughters.

This is not a number. These were precious lives, many of them breadwinners for their families, our nation's pride. I will not stand idly and witness yet another generation of Afghans lost to war and bloodshed. Let me repeat, peace is our nation's imperative.

We gratefully acknowledge the Resolute Support mission of train, advise and assist. But it should be crystal clear here today that Afghans are fighting and dying, not only for our constitutional order, sovereignty, national unity and the right to life and happiness of the current and future generations of Afghans, but also to defend a front line that guards the rest of the world from the global threat of international terrorism.

I ask for a moment of silence, in honor of both Afghan and international security forces and the thousands of civilians who have been martyred in defense of our rights as a people, a nation, and a state.

Moment of Silence

Thank you. Ensuring the functioning of our defense and security forces and our civil service according to the law is an absolutely essential element to enduring peace and security.

The Nature and Dimensions of War

A true sense of urgency, on the one hand, requires clarity of strategic focus, reasoned discourse, calmness and deliberation. On the other hand, the daily pain and suffering inflicted upon our people and our institutions, capabilities and capitals, is intense, relentless, and horrific. Unspeakable crimes are being committed against the Afghan people.

What is being practiced against our society and people is best characterized as unrestrained war— there is not a single sphere of our life that has not been attacked. Public streets, hospitals, mosques, universities, places of business, sports centers, schools.

The most recent attack on November 22 crossed all boundaries. A large gathering of Ulema celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, and listening to the recitation of the Holy Quran in a hotel were attacked by a suicide bomber.

The enormity of the crime is an indication that this conflict, which is being imposed upon us, has crossed all boundaries of decency, humanity, and the injunctions of all religions on peace, particularly the message of tolerance and peace which emanated from the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him.

This is unrestrained warfare. **Its ever-changing character is driven by four dimensions:**

1. Trans-national terrorist networks have targeted us since the hijacking of our country by Al-Qaeda in the 1990s. In their warped narrative, destruction of the Afghan society and state is a means for their world-wide destructive objectives—a reign of terror. They have nothing to offer the Afghan people. They have taken advantage of our strategic location in order to inflict pain on the region and the world. Afghanistan is not their objective but instead a critical site, a launch pad, for these networks—this fact very unfortunately brings the misguided from across the world to deliver death and destruction to our society. Today, we have over a dozen transnational terrorists networks operating in Afghanistan.
2. Transnational criminal organizations are the **second drivers** of conflict. In the same way that the cocaine cartels have driven the conflict in Colombia, the heroine cartels are a major driver of instability and violence in our country. The total farm-gate price of opium in Afghanistan for 2017 recorded was 1.4 billion USD, and 0.6 billion USD in 2018. But the street value in Europe, Russia, Australia and now Canada runs into the hundreds of billions. Our collective failure to design and implement an agricultural transformation of Afghanistan has not

only resulted in perpetuation of poverty and inequality but has also provided the enabling conditions for transnational criminal organizations to exploit Afghan farmers.

3. **The third dimension** is the failure of some neighboring countries – and one in particular – to fulfill all their obligations under UN conventions against terrorism. Unfortunately, the Afghan government’s efforts to reduce violence generated by Taliban attacks and protect our people is undercut by this repetitive failure. Even as the ANDSF confront the Taliban and disrupt networks planning attacks against Afghan civilians, some neighboring countries have not cooperated fully in reducing and eliminating the Taliban’s ability to recruit, train and support fighters inside Afghanistan. If we were dealing with a conflict that only had national dimensions, the war would have been over a long time ago. We have repeatedly stated to our neighbors that our relations must address three critical dimensions: 1) removal of a specter of violence emanating from the region, 2) defining a normal and cooperative relationship between all countries in the region; and 3) agreeing on a framework of counter-terrorism.

4. The Afghan Taliban are the **fourth driver** of conflict. They are Afghan by origin and therefore as a nation and a state, we must deal with and resolve the differences that divide us and embrace common goals that will unite us. It is with this premise that we made an unconditional offer of negotiations with the Afghan Taliban. We argue that the platform provided by the Taliban has enabled the other three drivers. Our question to the Taliban is: would you like to be the sacrificial lamb of these entities, kill your fellow Afghan citizens, and die to the very last one of you, for the sake of the self-serving agendas of others? Let me be explicit—the Taliban have a clear choice at this point, which we present to them—choose to act as Afghans, or accept the manipulation by entities that have no vision for our collective future as a people, or respect for our dignity, freedom and sovereignty.

Negotiations with the Taliban

What is our approach now moving forward?

To bring an end to this unrestrained war, we have to deal with the national and the regional Islamic dimensions, as well as the drivers of the conflict. The compassion, conviction and courage required for dealing with the Taliban manifest in our February offer and our subsequent leadership on follow-up actions, which I discussed above.

Here, I would like to share some announcements and highlight our most recent thinking on negotiations with the Taliban and how we are proceeding.

1. **First** of all, I am pleased to announce that our 12-member negotiating team is ready, and presidential chief of staff Salam Rahimi will lead the negotiation team. He is a man who has imminent Jihadi and civil society credentials. The team includes women and men who have the necessary credentials to deal with the key challenges of peace, particularly with a focus on a feasible and credible implementation plan.
2. **Second**, to ensure consensus and to provide direction to the negotiating team, I also announce the formation of diverse groups of individuals into a peace advisory board which will serve as a network of networks to provide timely advice on critical issues in peace negotiations. The peace advisory board will be comprised of nine committees addressing various segments of our society.
3. **Third**, the High Peace Council, based on their own request and with support from the government, will be restructured to focus on public awareness and will provide advice and input to the government regarding post-peace scenarios.
4. **Fourth**, let me clarify our proposed approach to negotiations. We aim to first arrive at a list of key issues from both the Taliban's side and the government's side, then to classify and categorize these into a table of contents of key issues. We will then assign each of the key topics to a joint committee, where both sides of the negotiating teams, and other Afghans with necessary skills, will be brought in. The key members of the two negotiating teams—government and Taliban—will focus on the key issues that divide us and which need to be resolved.

5. Negotiations will happen in phases. We propose the following sequencing of phases:
 - a. **Phase one** will be intra-Afghan, where we deal with the key six building blocks of peace.
 - i. The first building block is a political process: ceasefire, recognition of the Afghan Taliban as a political party, transitional confidence-building arrangements and inclusive, credible, free and fair elections.
 - ii. The second building block is the legal framework: constitutional review, justice and resolution of grievances, enabling laws or decrees, prisoner release and removal from sanctions lists.
 - iii. The third building block is reorganization of the state: rule of law and reform, balanced spatial development, reintegration of refugees and internally displaced populations.
 - iv. The fourth building block of peace is security: for the public, as well as for the reconcilable who are being reintegrated.
 - v. The fifth building block of peace is social and economic development: inclusive and sustained growth, equitable access to land and public assets, fighting corruption, national job creation programs, reintegration of refugees and ex-combatants.
 - vi. And the sixth building block of peace is support and partnership with the international community: diplomatic and financial support, status of foreign fighters and removal from sanctions lists.
 - b. **Phase two** will involve joint discussions with Pakistan, the United States, and NATO. Relations between NATO, the US and Afghanistan are governed by the Status of Forces Agreement, the Strategic Partnership Compact, and the Bilateral Security Agreement. All are public documents and duly ratified by consultative loya jirgas and the parliament of Afghanistan. Relations between the Taliban and Pakistan however are shrouded in mystery. The UN charter has enshrined the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of other states. This relationship needs to be clarified.
 - c. **Phase three** will require participation of the regional actors ranging from China, India, Russia and Turkey to our immediate neighbors.
 - d. **Phase four** will be garnering support from the Arab-Islamic world, including Indonesia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

- e. **Phase 5** will be garnering support from NATO and non-NATO member states, and developmental partners who have generously supported us both on the battlefield and in our development efforts.
 - f. **The result** of this phased approach will be an inclusive and comprehensive peace agreement that engages all stake holders at the appropriate times.
6. To ensure commitment and to also display commitment of the Afghan government, we propose three critical measures.
- I. First, putting implementation front and center—meaning a time-bound implementation plan will be part of the peace agreement.
 - II. Second, confidence-building measures upon the commencement of peace talks will also continue during the negotiations, to ensure the commitment of the government during the first year of peace is genuine. We propose front-loading those undertakings, which will require political will.
 - III. Third, a national mechanism of ratification will be agreed upon during the discussions. These could be any appropriate body, such as the parliament, a loya jirga (as specified in the constitution), or by a referendum.

Now, the question that is often raised is the relation between peace and the forthcoming presidential elections. Let me get to the heart of the matter directly—we need an elected government with a mandate to obtain ratification, implement the peace agreement, and lead the societal reconciliation process. I can guarantee you that any other government would have refused to engage in its last months with an issue as significant as peace.

However, Dr. Abdullah and I each ran on a platform of peace and feel that it is our calling and responsibility to act on the national imperative to push the peace process as far as we possibly can in the time allotted to us by the vote of the Afghan public in 2014.

But let it be crystal clear though that implementation of our proposed peace process will minimally require a period of five years. We will have to reintegrate approximately 4 million Afghans that are living as refugees in Iran and Afghanistan.

We should not forget that 40% of Afghans are living below the poverty line and that environmental change and drought is reeking havoc both in the lives of our people and

the destruction of our natural capital – our pasture lands, water basins and other natural resources. These matters also require immediate attention.

However, given the national consensus on peace, I am confident that leading presidential candidates will join us in acting on the national sense of true urgency to get to an agreement. The presidential elections provide the appropriate platform for a truly national discussion on ending the conflict and ensuring sustainable and lasting peace.

Regional Consensus

Given that we have been in conflict for 39 years and over 4 million Afghan refugees are residing in neighboring countries, peace in Afghanistan requires renewal of the regional consensus.

After the tragedy of 9/11, the regional consensus on a stable Afghanistan was spontaneous. Today, however, the regional consensus needs to be actively recreated, as some actors either see us as part of a broader chess game with their rivals or are uncertain of stability. We argue that a stable Afghanistan is essential to regional cooperation, stability and prosperity. We suggest a change of focus in the following five areas.

1. First, we must change the perception of Afghanistan as a site of danger or a battle ground for proxy warfare, to a platform of cooperation by location and by strategic perspective. Afghanistan is a roundabout for the mutually beneficial exchange of data, goods, and ideas. In the past five years, we have offered constructive ideas and followed up on them to demonstrate in practice that a cooperative advantage outweighs the competitive drive between our regional neighbors. At the Shanghai Conference, we articulated this view and were grateful that many leaders, including India, China and Uzbekistan, strongly endorsed this change in perspective.
2. Second, this change of perspective should be followed by a change of policy. Our relationships with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan are an illustration of how changed policies have led to a massive increase in economic cooperation and governmental coordination. Thanks to the change in perspective and policies, Afghanistan today is an integral part of central Asia. The air corridor with India and now with China, Turkey and Europe is another illustration on how change in policies can bring mutual and enduring benefits.

3. Third, we emphatically seek peace with all of our neighbors. We have not posed a threat to any of our neighbors—it is simply not in our national interest. Moreover, without Afghanistan as a bridge—there can be no sustained economic linkages between South Asia and Central Asia.
4. Fourth, we need a coordinated regional endorsement and appropriate guarantees of peace with the Taliban.
5. Fifth, we feel that there is a regional imperative to create agreement on security, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, and create the appropriate organizational instruments for ensuring systematic and sustained attention, to safeguard our collective security and well-being. The regional environment does not operate on the basis of political boundaries. Water management is essential to our collective interests. We suggest coordination both in terms of response to natural disasters and emergencies, and to preservation and stewardship of our common natural capital, ranging from forests to water resources.

International Consensus

Let me express gratitude on behalf of the Afghan people for the strong international support extended to Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11. Neither blood nor treasure was spared to help us realize the vision and the dreams of the Afghan nation which we strongly articulated in the emergency loya jirga of 2002 and the constitutional loya jirga of 2004.

Some Afghan leaders wasted the golden opportunity of heightened international support and did not nurture these partnerships or deliver on the aspiration of our people. Why? This is better left to the judgement of history.

As far as the government of national unity is concerned, we have succeeded against all odds and in the face of immense violence to own our problems and the solutions and move forward on the basis of national consensus. To ensure that our common goal of peace is achieved, we suggest five areas of focus for our international partners.

1. First, continue in a supporting role as we Afghans take the lead. We not only know our problems but have shown the capability, the judgement and the perseverance to lead under trying circumstances without losing a sense of direction or priority. Peace is our national imperative and we commit to sacrifices that responsibility and leadership demands of us.

2. Second, the Bilateral Security Agreement and Status of Forces Agreement were entered into by a sovereign Afghan state, with the US and NATO. Discussion of these agreements and any changes to them can only be negotiated through discussion, per agreement of the signing parties. Our armed forces, whose sacrifices have known no bounds, need clarity and assurance that their newly-found capacities and capabilities are not going to be compromised and frittered away.
3. Third, sovereign rights are the hallmark and foundation of the current international order. The government of national unity has pursued a clear and systematic agenda of reforms. We will be sharing achievements and steps forward in our reforms agenda in various side events and the plenary of this conference. Respecting these sovereign rights minimally requires coordination and co-chairing of any discussion on peace. There cannot be double standards. Any breach of our sovereignty will be met with a strong reaction from our people who throughout the course of history have embraced those who come in friendship, but have resisted aggression and invasion at all costs.
4. Fourth, we should start discussions on international endorsements and guarantees of the peace agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Given the multi-dimensional conflicts that are being waged over Afghanistan, we need imagination and the best of diplomatic skills to think through arrangements that can secure Afghanistan's future, including ensuring Afghanistan can provide for its own security without the permanent presence of foreign forces. Of course, a coordinated effort to eliminate the threat posed by transnational terrorist organizations is an essential and necessary step for ensuring that the sacrifices in blood and treasure of our international partners will not be in vain.
5. Fifth, arriving at an enduring and lasting peace requires inputs and an agreed-upon process of endorsement by our international partners. Agreeing to the phased sequence that we have suggested today, or offering alternative sequences, will be helpful to the success of the process. The area where we will need maximum support is in thinking through the requirements of a post-peace agreement Afghanistan.

As we will highlight in the plenary session, Afghanistan is committed to pursuing a roadmap of self-reliance by 2024, marking the end of the decade of transformation. Fortunately, Afghanistan has been endowed with the natural capital to achieve self-reliance. Therefore, our emphasis is not to seek more aid but to change the modalities of aid to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and transparency and to seek connectivity

with the region, and trade, transit and investment from the rest of the world. A dynamic economy focused on inclusive growth and directed towards the goal of poverty reduction, and then poverty elimination, is essential to a lasting peace.

Absorption of ex-combatants, assisting the Afghan Taliban to transform themselves into a political party and creating mechanisms to address their legitimate grievances and building trust through confidence building measures are ingredients to ensuring true reconciliation.

Reconciliation is also going to be a social process where we accept each other in earnest. This in turn requires equal attention to the process of nation-building within the framework of rights and obligations of our constitution.

Afghan women and youth are crucial to this journey from chaos, conflict, criminality and corruption to stability, peace, prosperity and inclusion. Millions of Afghans whose lives are today lived in the shadow of fear, must embrace hope and create the opportunities to allow us to be the makers of our destiny.

I hope and pray that we will be able to deliver on our vision of peace and the program necessary to make sure it is a credible and lasting peace. We count on your support and we thank you for engaging with us.