

Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians Dialogue Round VII

December 11-12, 2012
Islamabad, Pakistan

Joint Declaration

Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan met in Islamabad, Pakistan, on December 11-12, 2012, for Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians Dialogue-VII.

Parliamentarians supported the necessity of a candid and continued dialogue on critical issues of concern. Both sides, however, agreed that dialogue and diplomacy should be conducted through diplomatic and Parliamentary channels and not through media.

MPs recognised and appreciated the diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the two countries in the recent past to improve relations. They stressed that difficulties and trust-deficit in the relationship must be overcome through mutual dialogue. MPs underscored that stability in Pakistan is in the interest of Afghanistan while stability in Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan. They agreed that the two countries must emphasise on finding political solutions to the issues at hand.

Parliamentarians agreed that prospects of exit of US/NATO combat troops from Afghanistan pose both opportunities and challenges for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The two countries need to work together to convert challenges into opportunities.

Parliamentarians also stressed on the continuation and acceleration of talks on peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

MPs agreed that supremacy or leadership role of any third country in the region is not needed presently or after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

MPs highlighted that terrorism poses the greatest challenge to both countries and their mutual relationship. Both countries must work together to thwart and uproot the “common enemy.” Anyone in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, who is responsible for a terrorist incident in Afghanistan and Pakistan must be stopped by the Afghan and Pakistan Governments respectively.

Parliamentarians asked the two Governments to provide special protection to trade and businesspersons of the two countries.

Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed that a free and fair electoral process in each country has the greatest potential to include various players in each country into the affairs of the state.

Parliamentarians also demanded that tourism needs to be promoted between the two countries.

Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan welcomed the recent sharing of draft between the two countries on the proposed Strategic Partnership Agreement and asked for its early finalisation and signing.

Parliamentarians also welcomed the agreement between the two countries to set-up and operationalise a joint Commission on Prisoners. They stressed, once again, that the two countries should sign a treaty of extradition of criminals on both sides.

They also stressed that Parliaments of the two countries should nudge and support their respective executive branches to enter into negotiations on critical issues and pen these down into treaties. Once put in place, the agreements and treaties should be ratified and faithfully implemented by both sides.

Both sides emphasized that the Public representatives from both countries must lead efforts to promote relationship, highlighting that Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan should assess the performance of their respective Parliaments.

MPs called for exploring multiple dimensions of relationship between the two countries including increasing economic opportunities for the people, mutual trade facilitation, education and exchange programmes for youth and teachers.

The two sides stressed that greater facilitation, support and opportunities need to be provided to Afghan students to study in Pakistan through scholarships, skill-enhancement and capacity-building programmes.

Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan stressed on the need to promote an across-the-board visa-free travel between the two countries. This can begin by allowing visa-free travel for diplomats and business persons and to gradually move forward to apply across to all citizens in two countries.

Afghan Parliamentarians appreciated the hospitality of Pakistan while hosting a large number of Afghan refugees. Parliamentarians also called for facilitation by both governments for an early and voluntary return of Afghan refugees in Pakistan to Afghanistan with dignity and honour.

Envisioning a Parliament of South Asia on the model of the EU Parliament, MPs asked the Afghan and Pakistan Governments to initiate proposals in this regard.

Reviewing progress on implementation of recommendations emanating from earlier Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Dialogues, MPs noted that satisfactory developments are taking place at the official level but asked for a consistent coordination and follow-up in this regard. Parliamentarians agreed that Parliamentary Friendship Groups and PILDAT must set-up the facilitation of a core committee of MPs in both Parliaments to prioritise issues for future dialogues as well as follow up on implementation of recommendations emanating from Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Dialogues.

Parliamentarians also called for proportional representation of political parties/groups, regions and gender, as reflected in the Parliaments of both countries, in future Parliamentary dialogues.

Parliamentarians asked that the Parliamentary Friendship Groups in two Parliaments must play an effective role in removing mistrust between the brotherly countries.

Parliamentarians underscored that earlier recommendations from the 6 Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Dialogues must be implemented at the earliest. Of these, they especially underscored:

- i. Address apprehensions regarding Terrorists' safe havens in both countries
- ii. Effective control over cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs and its related substances, fuelling terrorist-financing and terrorism in the region
- iii. Improve and enhancing border security management
- iv. Banking reforms on Money Laundering and Terrorist financing
- v. Greater coordination between Armed Forces, Intelligence Communities and Security Agencies of Pakistan and Afghanistan
- vi. Effective mechanisms to carry out due diligence of NGO funding in both countries
- vii. Facilitating and enhancing communication networks including roads, rail and air travel, telephony and trade
- viii. Facilitation of greater media interaction and exchange, both print and electronic, between the two countries by urging and facilitating both governments and independent media networks to operate in each other's country

Parliamentarians suggested that the future dialogue may focus on issues including effects of the withdrawal of NATO/US combat troops from Afghanistan, progress on peace talks on peace and reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan, Trade Promotion and Formalisation, Education, signing of Water Treaty between Pakistan and Afghanistan, agreement on an Extradition Treaty and Joint Patrolling of Borders, etc.

Parliamentarians of Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed, upon conclusion of the dialogue, to share joint declaration with their respective Parliaments and the Foreign Offices of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Co-Chaired by **Honourable Senator Abdulwali Raji**, Member of the Meshrano Jirga, and **Honourable Mr. Mirwais Yasini**, Member of the Wolesi Jirga, Afghan MPs who joined the dialogue included **Senator Ahmad Mawen**, **Senator Bahramkhan Samkani**, **Senator Baz Mohammad Zormati**, **Senator Mohammad Amin Safi** and **Senator Nisar Ahmad Haress**, **Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Qael**, **Mr. Abdul Latif Pedram**, **Mr. Amir Mohammad Yar**, **Mr. Mahmood Khan Sulaiman Khail**, **Mr. Quadratullah Zaki**, **Mr. Sakhi Mshwani** and **Sayed Ishaq Gailani**.

Pakistani MPs belonging to different parties participated in the dialogue including **Honourable Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi**, MNA, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and convenor of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, **Senator Muhammad Jehangir Bader**, Leader of the House, Senate of Pakistan, **Senator Raja Zafar ul Haq**, Chairman PML-N, chairman Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production, **Senator Haji Muhmmad Adeel**, Senior Vice President of Awami National Party-ANP and Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, **Senator Farhatullah Babar**, (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PPP), **Senator Hasil Khan Bizenjo**, (Balochistan, NP), **Senator Abdul Nabi Bangash**, (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ANP), **Senator Amar Jeet**, (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ANP), **Senator Muhammad Saleh Shah Qureshi**, (FATA, Ind.), **Senator Najma Hameed**, **Senator Najam ul Hassan** (Ind, FATA), (Punjab,

PML-N), **Senator Nuzhat Sadiq**, (Punjab, PML-N), **Senator Saeeda Iqbal**, (Islamabad Capital Territory, PPPP), **Mr. Abdul Qadir Khanzada**, MNA (NA-242, Karachi-IV, Sindh, MQM), **Mr. Abdul Rasheed Godil**, MNA (NA-252, Karachi-XIV, Sindh, MQM), **Mr. Asif Husnain**, MNA (NA-255, Karachi-XVII, Sindh, MQM), **Ms. Imrana Saeed**, MNA (NA-318, Sindh, MQM), **Mr. Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan**, MNA (NA-256, Karachi-XVIII, Sindh, MQM), **Ms. Jamila Gillani**, MNA(NA-323, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ANP), **Dr. Muhammad Ayub Shaikh**, MNA (NA-254, Karachi-XVI, Sindh, MQM), **Mr. Muhammad Rehan Hashmi**, MNA (NA-245, Karachi-VII, Sindh, MQM), **Mr. Naseer Bhutta**, MNA (NA-127, Lahore-X, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Qudsia Arshad**, MNA (NA-275, Women, Punjab, PML-N), **Mr. Riaz Fatiana**, MNA (NA-94, Tobatek Singh-III, Punjab, PML), **Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar**, MNA (NA-102, Hafizabad-I, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Seema Jameeli**, MNA (NA-277, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Shireen Arshad Khan**, MNA (NA-283, Punjab, PML-N), and **Ms. Shagufta Sadiq**, MNA (NA-319, Sindh, MQM), **Ms. Tasneem Siddique**, MNA (NA-285, Punjab, PML-N) and **Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb**, MNA (NA-276, Punjab, PML-N).