

Chair's Summary

of the International Contact Group Meeting

Berlin, Germany, 3 February 2016

1. Members of the International Contact Group (ICG) met on 3 February 2016 in Berlin to discuss the political, security, and economic situation in Afghanistan. The State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Dr. Markus Ederer, and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Mr. Hekmat Khalil Karzai, opened the meeting, which was chaired by Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser, ICG Chairperson and German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, International Contact Group Member States and multilateral organizations, including the United Nations, NATO, the EU, and OIC, as well as a representative of Afghan civil society attended the meeting.

2. The Deputy National Security Adviser of Afghanistan, Mr. Muhammad Suleman Kakar, and General Frank Leidenberger, Chief of Staff, Headquarters Resolute Support, briefed on security challenges a year into the assumption of full responsibility for security by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. ICG members acknowledged the bravery and sacrifice exhibited by the ANDSF over the past year against insurgent and terrorist groups, including Da'esh. They also noted the persistence of significant capability gaps, which require continued training, assistance and advice, notably in the framework of the Resolute Support Mission. ICG members underlined the need for the ANDSF to prepare for the challenges ahead, in particular with regard to leadership, coordination, efficiency, and the fight against corruption. With a view to the envisaged discussion of renewal of the Chicago pledges at the July 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit, they stressed the importance of continuing international support at or near current levels during the next years.

3. The acting Deputy Minister of Finance of Afghanistan, Mr. Ameen Habibi, the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan, Ambassador Franz-Michael Mellbin, and the Executive Director of the Afghan Civil Society Forum Organization, Mr. Aziz Rafiee, informed about the state of implementation of the "Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework" (SMAF) and preparations for the October 2016 Brussels Conference on Afghanistan. While acknowledging progress made, ICG members underlined that further visible results were needed this year in the implementation of SMAF commitments. They particularly stressed the urgency of electoral and economic reforms as well as of measures against corruption. Looking ahead to the Brussels Conference, ICG members agreed on the importance of sustaining donor commitments in order to secure, consolidate, and build on gains achieved in Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

4. Deputy Foreign Minister Karzai and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, provided an assessment of chances for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of peace and national reconciliation as well as an update on the efforts of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group comprising representatives of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States. ICG members agreed that a sustainable solution to the conflict could only be achieved through a political process, which would require patience and resilience. They expressed their joint support for the quadrilateral initiative and called on States with influence on the Taliban to reinforce the call to enter into talks with the Afghan government. ICG members welcomed the announcement by Deputy Minister Karzai that the Afghan government's negotiating team would include a female member.

5. The Country Director of the International Organization for Migration in Afghanistan, Mr. Laurence Hart, and the Afghan Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Shah

Salehi, presented ongoing efforts regarding migration from Afghanistan. ICG members noted that Afghanistan and transit and host countries shared an interest in that young, educated Afghans can find a future in their own country and contribute to its development. ICG members stressed the need to reverse the brain-drain from Afghanistan, to create job opportunities, and to respect obligations with regard to the readmission of nationals not in need of international protection.

6. On behalf of the Government of Germany, the Chair thanked ICG members for their continued dedication to international and regional efforts to support Afghanistan, emphasizing especially the significant work undertaken by the National Unity Government of Afghanistan and its international partners to ensure that the Afghan people have the support they need in the first year after the security transition and the beginning of the Transformation Decade.