

The speech of Deputy Foreign Minister Akylbek Kamaldinov at the Sixth
Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process
(December, 4th 2016, Amritsar)

**Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Your Excellencies, Ministers and heads of delegations!
Esteemed participants,**

First of all, let me express our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of India for hosting and excellent organization of this conference.

The main topic of this conference – “The Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process: Addressing Challenges, Achieving Prosperity” – expresses our common endeavor to promote regional cooperation for stability, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan and the entire Heart of Asia region.

Your Excellencies,

The Almaty declaration of the 3rd Ministerial Conference reaffirmed that “our shared interests are best served by cooperation, rather than competition”.

Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev stated that “transparent approaches, constructive policy, rejection of geopolitical strategies that damage the stable development of the region - are the main components of our thesis about the "platform of regional interests."

We note with satisfaction that the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process has been moving in a right direction. We have agreed that our regional countries should share common interests despite the differences in strategic, political and economic ways of development.

The Istanbul Process participants have to continue this dialogue to promote united approach to the solution of the problems of Afghanistan.

Dear Colleagues,

The activities within the 6 Confidence Building Measure (CBM) Regional Technical Groups have been practical steps in strengthening regional cooperation in different areas.

Kazakhstan and Pakistan coordinate joint efforts in the disaster management CBM regional technical group. We appreciate the active participation of all the members of this technical group. I would like to inform you that Kazakhstan will hold the next meeting of this regional technical group (RTG) in Astana on December 9, 2016.

Likewise let me inform you that the Central Asian Disaster Response and Risk Reduction Center in Almaty has officially started its activities. The Almaty Center aims at ensuring regular communication on disaster cases and increasing better preparedness to natural and man-made disasters.

We're looking forward to working closely with our Afghani partners who also joined this center.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I reiterate call to the participants of the Istanbul process to join the Central Asian Disaster Response and Risk Reduction Center in Almaty.

Esteemed participants,

We remain concerned by the security situation in Afghanistan and the level of violence caused by the armed opposition and terrorist organizations.

International community should continue its assistance to the Government of Afghanistan in overcoming the current challenges. Lack of security and growing instability hinder implementation of regional projects that aim reconstruction of the country.

Within its international obligations the Government of Kazakhstan in October 2016 transferred funds to assist the Afghan national defense and security forces. We believe that the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) will be capable of maintaining security in the country as it affects not only Afghanistan but the whole region.

Dear Colleagues,

This year Kazakhstan was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017 – 18. Central Asia is going to be represented on the UN Security Council for the first time in its history, so Kazakhstan's membership is a chance to draw attention of the Council to regional security issues, the importance of Afghanistan in maintenance of security and stability in Central Asia.

We see great potential for the countries of the region to be a collective front of the world community in the fight against international terrorism, extremism, illegal migration, drug traffic and other contemporary challenges.

In this context we will assume chairmanship in the Committee on Taliban/Afghanistan (1988) given our regional expertise, well-established bilateral ties with all stakeholders and a genuine interest in political settlement and social and economic development of this country. This committee will be our priority interest during our UN Security Council membership.

Your Excellencies,

Kazakhstan believes that peace and national consensus in Afghanistan is the paramount goal of the international diplomacy.

Kazakhstan supports the Government of National Unity in its efforts to continue a dialogue with the armed opposition and we hope that initiatives in this direction will resume and bring positive results.

Kazakhstan has always advocated an open and transparent approach in addressing Afghanistan issues and calls upon concerned parties to take certain steps that will promote security and stability in Afghanistan.

Our partners within Istanbul process should recognize their responsibility in securing regional stability within the framework of multilateral cooperation.

We are confident that only by joint efforts we will effectively contribute to the formation of a secure and sustainable state of Afghanistan.

Distinguished participants.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Kazakhstan's commitment to cooperation with all concerned parties to reach peace and stability in Afghanistan. In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a fruitful session in the spirit of mutual understanding and openness.

Thank you for your attention!