

**Senior Official Meeting of 'Heart of Asia'- Istanbul Process, Beijing, 10 July
2014**

Summary of the Meeting

The Third Senior Officials meeting of the 'Heart of Asia'- Istanbul Process, following the 'Heart of Asia' Ministerial Meeting held on 26 April 2013, in Almaty, was hosted by the People's Republic of China in Beijing on 10th July 2014. The meeting commenced with opening remarks by the co-chairs H.E Liu Zhenmin, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and remarks from, H.E Ershad Ahmadi, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The first session of the meeting was attended by representatives from 13 'Heart of Asia' countries, joined by 16 Supporting countries and 5 regional and International organizations in the second session.

In his opening remarks H.E Liu Zhenmin, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China said that "Peace, stability and long term security of Afghanistan are not only in the fundamental interests of Afghanistan and its people, but also beneficial to peace and stability of the region and the world." He also expressed that "The achievement of these goals would not be possible without the long-term support and strong assistance of the regional countries and international society." He mentioned that "in the future, China will continue to work with other regional countries and the international community to make due contributions to help advance Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction and smooth transition, and promote regional peace, stability and development."

H.E Ershad Ahmadi, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan thanked the People's Republic of China for hosting the meeting and welcomed the participants and said that "Heart of Asia- Istanbul Process is an important priority for Afghanistan. The platform is intended to focus on the shared challenges and seeks common solution for Heart of Asia countries." Further, he provided brief assessment on the current situation in Afghanistan including the political development and the presidential election results. He noted the successful organization of the two rounds election, in which a millions of Afghans took part. He also appreciated the performance by the Afghan National Security forces for maintaining the security and providing the opportunity for the Afghan people to exercise their democratic rights. He said that "we hope the transition of power in Afghanistan will be successfully completed in accordance with the constitutional mechanisms and legal frameworks."

He concluded with thanking all the participating countries of the meeting and the People's Republic of China for hosting the next Ministerial Conference in China in 2014.

H.E Ahmadi, reviewed the agenda of the meeting, which consisted of brief information about the preparation of the Tian Jin Ministerial, discussion on the key elements of the “Tian Jin Ministerial Conference declaration” and update on the CBMs implementation progress by the lead countries. The second part of the meeting in which representatives from supporting countries and international and regional organizations joined the meeting, commenced with a brief summary of the first session by the co-chairs followed by the launch of the ‘Heart of Asia’-Istanbul Process website through a presentation and the statement from the supporting countries, regional and international organizations.

a) Brief information regarding preparation of the Almaty Ministerial

H.E. Liu Zhenmin, the co-chair briefed the meeting regarding China’s preparation on the next Ministerial Meeting of the Istanbul Process to be held on 29 August 2014 in Tian Jin City. He said that this will be the first international conference for Afghanistan after the inauguration of the new government and thus will be of a high historical importance. He said that “The conference will help to demonstrate the support of the regional countries and the international community to the new government and the new leader of Afghanistan, and will send our important signal that the international community will continue to firmly support peace and reconstruction as well as political, security and economic transitions in Afghanistan.” Further, H.E Zhenmin expressed that a Joint statement by the Senior Officials meeting of the ‘Heart of Asia’- Istanbul Process on current situation of Afghanistan is drafted for your comments, which would be released after this meeting. The participants were suggested to comment on the draft of the joint statement.

The participants thanked the co-chairs for briefing about the preparation of the Tian Jin Ministerial and current situation in Afghanistan. They expressed their strong support to the peaceful, sovereign and united Afghanistan. They also said that peace in Afghanistan is collective desire of the region and we support the conclusion of the election process according to the constitutional and legal frameworks.

b) Discussion on key elements of the Tian Jin Ministerial Conference Declaration

H.E Ahmadi stated that the comments from all the participants on the Tian Jin draft declaration, which was already circulated among all the participants, are welcomed. He said that to finalize the declaration couple of ambassadors meetings will be held in Kabul.

The participants complimented the draft declaration provided by the co-chairs, and asked for detailed information about new concepts/ideas introduced in the declaration. They also said that we should keep our expectations realistic with the key message of non-interference to achieve peaceful, united and prosperous Afghanistan. The participants requested for more elaboration on paragraphs 10, 11,

12, 16, 21, 23. They also mentioned that the continuity of this declaration with previous declarations and the guiding principles are very important.

H.E Ahmadi, welcomed the comments from the 'Heart of Asia' countries and said that we will have number of opportunities to look into the declaration paragraph by paragraph, which will provide us with the opportunity to draft and revise as necessary. He said that: I concur that the Tian Jin Ministerial Conference is taking place in the critical juncture in Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia region. As you know, this is a first foreign policy regional engagement that the new afghan government will be leading based on the particular goals of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, which includes both political dialogue and also CBMs, therefore, we should try to make sure that there is political consultation and consensus.

C) Update on the CBM Implementation plans by the lead countries

H.E Ahmadi, explained the certain documents about the CBM's progress circulated at the table, included, CBM Implementation General Progress since Almaty Ministerial, CBM Activity Implementation Progress since Almaty Ministerial, CBM Activity Implementation Progress since Delhi Senior Officials Meeting, Guideline for implementation of the CBMs and Specific Criteria for implementation of each CBM. Afghanistan as a permanent chair of the 'Heart of Asia' - Istanbul Process provided recommendations for each CBM to make a list of prioritized activities considering the CBM guidelines. *(A copy of the documents are attached to this summary)*.*

The lead country for each CBM gave update information about their respective CBMs. The participants appreciated the update from the lead countries and noted that the implementation of the activities should avoid the mechanical approach and focus on the results.

d) Second Session (co-chairs briefing, presentation on Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Website as well as statements by the supporting countries, regional and international organizations)

In the second session the co-chairs provided a summary of the first session and the draft joint statement on the current situation of Afghanistan for the comment of the supporting countries as well as the international and regional organizations was circulated, which was followed by a presentation by Ms. Roya Rahmani, General Director of the Regional Cooperation Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan on the 'Heart of Asia' - Istanbul Process website, the address of which is (www.heartofasia-istanbulprocess.af).

The supporting countries appreciated the discussion on the key elements of the declaration and update on the confidence building measures as well as the briefing about the current situation in Afghanistan in the first session.

The representatives of the supporting countries and regional and international organizations made their statements. During this session the participants extended their support to the process, appreciated the declaration and thanked People's Republic of China for hosting the upcoming Ministerial conference. The supporting countries also urged to clarify and give more elaboration about the new parts of the draft declaration of the Tian Jin Ministerial Conference. The supporting countries as well as the regional and international organizations expressed that they will send their written suggestion about the draft declaration soon. They emphasized that along with the Tian Jin Ministerial Conference the NATO summit and London conference which will take place in the course of this year, are of paramount importance for the new government of Afghanistan.

The participants appreciated the launch of the 'Heart of Asia'- Istanbul process website in terms of streamlining the process, sharing information and coordinating activities between the levels.

H.E Ahmadi, in his closing remarks noted that peaceful Afghanistan living in harmony and peaceful neighborhood advances a new working vision towards regional cooperation and regional stability. He also said that regarding the funding modality, with reference to the Delhi Senior Officials meeting, we continue to explore the proposals of Funding modality study to address the issue of funding for the CBMs. He added that the discussion about the next host is going on. The co-chairs will decide it in private meetings and will inform all the participants.

The participants expressed appreciation for the productive meeting and thanked People's Republic of China for hosting this meeting. A Joint statement from the Senior Officials meeting of the 'Heart of Asia'-Istanbul Process about the current situation of Afghanistan was released at the end of this meeting. *(A copy of the Joint statement is attached)**