

Statement of G8 Foreign Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan
Original Version

Trieste, Italy, June 26, 2009

We, the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the G8, affirm our commitment to working together to address the challenges that affect Afghanistan and the region. Insurgency and terrorist activities, narcotics, trafficking, corruption, human rights violation and limited economic opportunities need to be tackled with resolve wherever they appear.

Foreign Ministers acknowledge that the pursuit of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region are linked. The Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the international community acknowledge the need for cooperation to defeat terrorism and extremism and promote stability and prosperity across the region. While recognizing the efforts being made, the G8 welcomes their pledge to continue to respect the rule of law and to protect and promote human rights of all persons within their countries, including respect for women's rights and freedom of expression.

Foreign Ministers acknowledge that narcotics trafficking remains a significant financial source for extremists. While welcoming the efforts of Afghanistan and all countries of the region and other international actors in combating illegal drug production and trade, call for a more coordinated and comprehensive approach among stakeholders.

Foreign Ministers reiterate their full support for UNAMA and the indispensable role it can and should play in Afghanistan, while recalling the important activity conducted by UN in Pakistan and in the entire area as well.

Afghan and Pakistani Foreign Ministers recognize the shared responsibility for the effective management and security of the Afghan-Pakistan border and agree on the pressing need for enhanced collaboration. Through ongoing meetings of the Coordination Arrangement of the "G8, Afghanistan, and Pakistan Initiative", G8 members will continue to support Afghan- and Pakistani-led development projects across Pakistan-Afghanistan border, building on the work of cooperative initiatives such as the Dubai Process. The G8 will review the implementation of the Coordination Arrangement in 2010 to ensure that it continues to meet border management needs.

G8, Afghan and Pakistani Foreign Ministers welcomed all recent regional initiatives beginning with the ministerial meeting in La Celle Saint-Cloud last December and including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference on Afghanistan in Moscow, the March 2009 conference in The Hague, the trilateral talks in Ankara, Washington, Tehran and Yekaterinburg and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan held in Islamabad. They also noted the importance of comprehensive approach to regional stabilization. G8 Foreign Ministers welcomed the results of the Islamabad meeting and confirmed the importance of implementing swiftly all the concrete engagements undertaken on this occasion. We view this regional ministerial meeting in Trieste and its enlarged and qualified participation as another positive step toward building a more secure, democratic and prosperous region. We also emphasize the vital importance of trans-regional development cooperation in reinforcing the goals of peace and stability and ushering in progress and prosperity in the region, including through the participation of the private sector and civil society.

The G8, Pakistan and Afghanistan Ministers recognize the urgency of providing alternative economic opportunities to communities, especially in areas where narco-trafficking and extremism are endemic. The G8 will continue to support the Afghanistan and Pakistan Governments' efforts by targeting assistance to spur socio-economic development and bolster human and institutional capacity. In the same vein the G8 endorses RECCA final Declaration, in particular the high priority expressed for regional cooperation and the improvement of bilateral trade and accession facilitation.

In Afghanistan, the G8 will continue to work with the Independent Election Commission to help ensure credible, inclusive and secure Afghan elections, and remain committed to assisting the United Nations (UN) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in providing the IEC with the necessary technical, logistical, financial and security support. Democracy and democratic institutions, both at national and local level, in Afghanistan deserve our support.

The G8 Ministers acknowledge Afghanistan's efforts to strengthen governance at national, provincial and district levels, including through the reform of key ministries. Despite these and other efforts, insecurity, widespread corruption and capacity shortfalls continue to complicate the delivery of basic services at the local level, including health, education and water. The G8 reaffirms the need for effectiveness and coordination in the aid delivery, reiterates their full support to Afghanistan National Development Strategy and is committed to assisting the Government of Afghanistan as it continues to work to ensure basic services and will also remain committed to working with the Afghan Government in strengthening democratic institutions both at national and local level, and addressing the prevailing challenges in the country.

The G8 welcomes the steps taken over the past year to bolster the capacity of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), though we acknowledge the continued shortfall of trainers and mentors for the ANA and the ANP. In the context of the Comprehensive strategy G8 members will work with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that the ANSF has the capacity to continue to assume greater responsibility for the security of the Afghan people.

The G8 Ministers highlighted the continuing challenges facing Afghan refugees and, in that regard, underscored sustained international assistance to ensure their safe, voluntary, gradual and dignified return and repatriation.

G8 recognized the positive improvement in bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the heightened level of trust between the leadership of the two countries. They encouraged the two countries to fully utilize existing bilateral and multilateral framework of engagements for the enhancement of trust and cooperation particularly in combating terrorism and noted the Declaration on the Direction of Bilateral Relations, concluded in January 2009, and the ongoing bilateral negotiations to conclude a new Trade and Transit Agreement before the end of this year. The achievement of sustainable solutions to their challenges will be the outcome not only of ongoing efforts by each country, but also of active bilateral cooperation in this endeavour. G8 Ministers stand ready to work with both Governments to promote peace, stability and development in the region as a whole.

The G8 remains committed to working with the Pakistani Government as it endeavours to strengthen functioning democratic institutions, and its civil society in the face of terrorism, extremism and militancy.

The G8 supports Pakistan's decisive action against violent extremism and militancy and acknowledge Pakistan's ongoing counterterrorism efforts. G8 Ministers recognized the resolve and the sacrifices which the Pakistani people and security forces are making in confronting these problems. G8 Ministers stressed the critical importance of standing with Pakistan in its counterterrorism efforts, including through the interdiction of supply of weapons and money to terrorists, armed groups, drug dealers and criminal gangs.

The G8 Ministers recognize the suffering of the civilian population along Pakistan's Western Frontier, with over 2 million IDPs. The G8 commits to working closely with the UN and humanitarian agencies to help provide assistance to those affected. The G8 also supports Pakistan's relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in this regard.

The G8 and Pakistan noted the importance of cooperation fora such as the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, which met in Tokyo in April 2009. The G8 welcomes the EU-Pakistan Summit. Foreign Ministers welcomed the success of the April 2009 Donors Conference in Tokyo where participants pledged over \$5bn to help Pakistan implement economic and social development and reforms which will allow for sound and transparent fiscal management.

We recognize that the serious difficulties confronting Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region require sustained engagement by all relevant actors. The assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan in their autonomous efforts to build cooperative, constructive relations for mutual security and economic development, has to reflect Afghan and Pakistani priorities, while emphasizing the need for Afghan and Pakistani leadership and action in all undertakings.

Source:

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