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Forum for the 21st century

International Assistance to Afghanistan

Statement to the 3rd DRAFT

The ASEAN Delegation very much appreciates the efforts of the Forum of the 21st Century put into developing Common Framework and Agreements on Development Aid for Afghanistan. We express our full support towards solving the challenges connected to the Development Aid for Afghanistan. With all respect to the Forum of the 21st Century, we would like to comment on and include our standpoint and our proposals to the 3rd Draft.

- Appreciating the forms of assistance remaining in the country both to help the country rebuild and to prevent it from sliding into another civil war;
- Bearing in mind that the 3rd Draft tries to specify the position of the delegations and to facilitate an arrival to a mutual understanding and to an agreement on comprehensive and concrete steps;
- Emphasizing **Education** as one of the key elements of development of the Afghan society;
- Supporting the idea of economic help being crucial to Afghanistan and the idea of deepening the cooperation with different international trade and also non-trade organizations;
- Considering improving security and **civilian stability** via tackling corruption, assuring fair elections and transparency;
- Recognizing the importance of supporting the work of local and international NGOs.

Therefore ASEAN subscribes itself to the endeavour of the Forum for 21st century to propose concrete plans in 4 key sectors: *education, civilian stability, security and economic development*. Furthermore, we support the idea of creating the umbrella document “**Comprehensive Agreement on international Assistance to Afghanistan**”.



KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE:

- ³⁵/₁₇ ASEAN very much appreciates the point of not imposing foreign ideas of running a country, that are dogmatic or ignorant and do not reflect the real circumstances of the people, the culture and/or the geography, on Afghanistan and the Afghans.
- ³⁵/₁₇ We welcome efforts of not applying the principle “**one size fits all approach**” as this would very much limit the possible cooperation between ASEAN and Afghanistan and allow only the multilateral approach, where special agreements would be excluded.
- ³⁵/₁₇ We agree with the idea of encouraging the activities of NGOs strengthening the Afghan Civil society being the crucial component.

PROPOSALS:

Education:

ASEAN recognizes the need and importance of creating a joint memorandum in the educational sector called “**Memorandum on promoting an Afghan Education Network**”. This will eliminate duplicating and will ensure effective distribution of help focusing it on specific fields according to the scope of possible help of respective countries. We fully support the point of including article instructing all participants to include women and future teachers in the agreements as the focus and crucial group.

We do not disagree with the possibility of voluntarily cooperation among ASEAN and Afghan higher education institutions.

Economic Development:

There will be further discussion upon the possibility of giving Afghanistan a **non-member observer status** at the ASEAN.

The ASEAN also supports the accession of Afghanistan to the World Trade Organization. The ASEAN wishes to support the progress of the ongoing accession process.

We join the efforts of creating the **Declaration on proceedings of the negotiations to signing a Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime (FTR) for Afghanistan** and the “**Declaration on Supporting the Development of “the New Silk Road”**” unless it is in accordance with the principle of “**one size does not fit all**”.



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Internal Security:

We still believe in sharing of best practices and of intelligence with the ANA and appreciate that Forum is respecting the principles of the international assistance, so that we are free to sign our own agreement with the Afghan government and share own intelligence and best practices to the extent and of the nature that we see appropriate. This would be more effective as it would be a direct bilateral agreement and would also take into account all the specific circumstances.

We would support “**Memorandum on Afghanistan’s path to full accession to the OSCE**” as well as **accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization** of which it is currently an observer.

We are very much open to the discussions which might arise from the propositions to the 3rd Draft from all parties involved. We hope to reach common decisions and draft the documents proposed in the 3rd Draft.

