

**AGREEMENT ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN
THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY
AND
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

The Governments of the Kingdom of Norway and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (hereinafter referred to as the Parties),

Based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

Reaffirming their commitment to peace, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law;

Recognising the need for continued collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its regional and international partners in order to reach the goal of a stable and secure Afghanistan in a stable and secure region;

Reiterating the mutual commitments made by the Parties to stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan in a series of international conferences, including the Bonn Conference of December 2011, the Chicago Summit of May 2012, and the Tokyo Conference of July 2012;

Appreciating the tradition of friendship and cooperation between the Parties, and *underscoring* their determination to develop a long-term partnership;

Reaffirming the commitment to respect the principles of international law, including respect for national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; and

Recognising that enduring stability in Afghanistan is dependent on political, economic and social development, and that regional cooperation is also critical in providing a conducive environment for Afghanistan's stability and economic growth;

Accordingly, based on mutual respect between the two sovereign states and their shared interests, have agreed to establish a long-term, strategic partnership covering the following areas:

Article 1

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

1. Stressing the need to exchange views and develop joint approaches to issues of common concern, the Parties agree to hold regular consultations at political as well as expert level.
2. Recognising that enduring stability in Afghanistan can only be achieved through a comprehensive and inclusive political process that includes all Afghans, the Norwegian Government will continue to support the Afghan Government in its efforts to achieve reconciliation. The Norwegian Government also supports the efforts of the High Peace Council in this connection. The Parties agree that the political process must be based on the principles of the Afghan Constitution, including the human rights norms and guarantees therein, including women's rights.
3. The Parties reaffirm their commitment to international law and to the peaceful resolution of conflicts between states. They are united in their determination to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorism.
4. The Parties recognise the importance of international assistance to improve security in Afghanistan. They are in agreement on the need to continue the efforts to build sustainable and professional Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) that act in accordance with the Afghan Constitution, and respect international human rights standards. The Norwegian Government will continue to support this process through the international structures developed to this end, including those established by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), or based on mutual agreement between the Parties. Consistent with its commitment at the NATO-ISAF Summit in Chicago in May 2012, the Norwegian Government will provide financial contribution to the development of the ANSF.

Article 2

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

1. Proceeding from the mutual commitments made at the Kabul, Bonn and Tokyo conferences, development cooperation between the Parties will seek to build democracy in Afghanistan and professional and human resource capacity, promote economic growth and build a society where all Afghans can build a better, safer and more prosperous country.
2. In accordance with its commitments at Tokyo, the Norwegian Government is committed to providing a high level of development assistance to Afghanistan, beyond 2014 and into the Transformation Decade. Good governance, including public administration reform, education, and rural development will continue to be priority

areas. This commitment is conditional on progress in the implementation of the full range of undertakings entered into by the Afghan Government at the Kabul, Bonn and Tokyo conferences as outlined in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

3. In line with the Kabul commitments to support the development priorities of the Afghan Government, Norway will provide at least 50 % of its assistance on budget and will continue to channel a large proportion of its aid through various multi-donor trust funds. It will also align 80% of its assistance with the Afghan Government's plans, and provide aid in a way that improves effectiveness.

4. The Norwegian Government will continue to channel some of its funding through NGOs, and commits itself to continuing to provide a substantial level of humanitarian assistance.

5. Other areas of development cooperation may be determined through mutual agreement.

Article 3

GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

1. The Parties reaffirm their mutual commitment to the aims and principles enshrined in the Kabul Process and the Afghan National Development Strategy on the issues of good governance and the fight against corruption. The Parties underscore the need for Afghanistan to develop strong, transparent and accountable institutions at both national and sub-national levels.

2. Both Parties reaffirm their commitment to democracy and human rights, including freedom of expression, and to promoting the rights of women to ensure that they have an equal position in society, including the right to education, the right to work and the right to take part in social, political and cultural life. The Parties remain committed to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960).

3. Afghanistan reaffirms its strong commitment to inclusive and pluralistic democratic government, including, free, fair and transparent elections. Reaffirming its commitments at the 2011 Bonn Conference, Afghanistan shall strengthen and improve its electoral process.

4. The Norwegian Government commits itself to supporting Afghanistan's efforts towards reform, institution-building and the delivery of basic services by remaining a long-term, predictable and consistent partner. Norway will also support initiatives to strengthen the role of Afghan women in society, especially with regard to participation in political and economic decision making processes.

5. The Parties recognise that a stable and secure Afghanistan based on the rule of law requires an efficient and accountable civilian police force that can meet the fundamental security requirements of the Afghan people. The Afghan Government commits itself to continuing its efforts to build such a police force. The Norwegian Government will continue to support this process by channelling part of its civilian assistance to Afghanistan through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan.

Article 4

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

1. Both Parties recognise that economic development, the creation of jobs and the alleviation of poverty are preconditions for a stable and secure Afghanistan. To that end, the Parties will cooperate on improving the conditions for investment and economic growth in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government recognises that this requires creating an environment amenable to foreign investments, including appropriate and effective legal frameworks, increased tax revenues and sound financial management of the economy, as well as infrastructure development and improved security. It commits itself to taking the appropriate steps to this end.

2. The Norwegian Government will help promote sustainable development across several sectors, and seek to support the capacity of the Afghan Government to develop Afghanistan's natural resources for the benefit of the Afghan people. The Norwegian Government will continue to promote equal education for all children in Afghanistan, irrespective of gender. This includes teacher training, drawing up appropriate curricula and improving vocational training.

3. The Norwegian Government will encourage Norwegian private sector investment in Afghanistan. Other areas of economic cooperation may be identified and implemented through mutual agreement.

Article 5

REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. The Parties recognise that the aim of a stable and secure Afghanistan requires a conducive regional framework. Accordingly, they agree to cooperate on promoting regional cooperation to enhance Afghanistan's role in the various regional organisations, processes and fora.

2. The Parties share the view that the Istanbul Process is a crucial initiative in the context of building confidence and promoting cooperation between Afghanistan and its near and extended neighbours. In this context, they welcome the outcome of the Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Kabul on 14 June 2012, and agree that the Istanbul process must primarily be developed by the countries directly concerned. Accordingly they call on the Heart of Asia countries to enter into a comprehensive regional

cooperation based on the principles agreed in Istanbul in November 2011. The Norwegian Government reaffirms its commitment to support the development of the Istanbul process, including through supporting the Afghan Government's capacity to ensure the effective implementation of the Istanbul Process Confidence Building Measures.

Article 6

MIGRATION

1. The Parties will work in partnership to tackle the trafficking and smuggling of human beings. They will continue to engage in close cooperation aimed at preventing illegal immigration and the illegal presence of physical persons of Afghan and Norwegian nationality in the other Party's territory, and will facilitate the return of such illegally present persons to their country of origin.

Article 7

FINAL PROVISIONS

1. This Strategic Partnership Agreement will remain in effect until 31 December 2017 or until terminated in writing by either Party giving three months notification or replaced by a new Partnership Agreement. Both Parties commit themselves to meeting annually at senior level to review the implementation of this Strategic Partnership Agreement.

2. The amounts and objectives of Norway's bilateral development assistance will be reviewed at regular intervals. This review will be based on an assessment of progress with regard to the implementation of the commitments made by the Parties, including the commitments by the Government of Afghanistan towards good governance, transparency, democratisation and the rule of law.

3. The present Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the receipt of Afghanistan's notification that respective ratification procedures have been completed.

Done at Oslo on 5 February 2013 in duplicate, in the Norwegian, Dari, Pashto, and English languages, all four texts being equally authentic. In case of divergent interpretations the English text shall prevail.

For the Government of the
Kingdom of Norway:

For the Government of the
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg

President Hamid Karzai