

## Conclusions of the 27<sup>th</sup> Tripartite Commission Meeting

Between

The Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan and UNHCR

Bhurban, Pakistan

19 July 2016

UNHCR hosted and chaired the 27<sup>th</sup> Tripartite Commission Meeting in Bhurban, Pakistan on 19 July 2016. The meeting was attended by the delegations of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan and representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Governments of the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Afghanistan expressed their appreciation to UNHCR for hosting this meeting.

The three parties signed an extension of the existing *Tripartite Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and UNHCR Governing the Repatriation of Afghan Citizens Living in Pakistan, valid until 31 December 2016*, to facilitate voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity, and enable their sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan.

All parties reaffirmed their commitment to the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), which remains the regional framework for identifying and implementing lasting solutions for the 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNHCR recognized the generosity and goodwill of the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghan refugees over the past three decades. Furthermore, the Government of Afghanistan and UNHCR expressed appreciation for the decision by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to extend the validity of the Proof-of-Registration (PoR) cards until 31 December 2016, and urged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to consider a long term extension of PoR cards to support voluntary repatriation.

The Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan expressed their appreciation to UNHCR for the recent increase of the voluntary repatriation and reintegration grant provided to returnees upon arrival in Afghanistan. The additional funds, which effectively double the cash package from approximately \$200 to \$400 per person, depending on transport costs to areas of origin, will support the initial reintegration of returning refugees in Afghanistan.

All parties reiterated their commitment to find sustainable solutions for the more than 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees currently in Pakistan, with voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity, remaining the preferred solution for registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The parties, referring to the conclusions of the 26<sup>th</sup> Tripartite Meeting in Kabul, further stressed the need to create an environment conducive for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, including by improving access to services, increased livelihood opportunities, and land allocation reform.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan provided an update on recent initiatives endorsed by the National Unity Government to ensure the sustainability of voluntary repatriation and reintegration. A five-year national plan of action will soon be presented to the High Commission for Migration, which integrates returnee needs within national development planning processes across responsible line ministries and endorsed by the President of Afghanistan in 2016. The Government

reaffirmed its commitment to continue to enhance efforts aimed at ensuring the sustainable reintegration for those who choose to voluntarily repatriate and expressed confidence that the Unified Plan of Action would yield tangible results and ensure action and accountability across line ministries.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan commended the Government of National Unity in Afghanistan for its ongoing commitment to finding sustainable solutions for longstanding displacement issues. The delegation welcomed concrete steps taken to fulfill this resolve, such as the establishment of the High Commission for Migration chaired by the President and the endorsement of the Comprehensive Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Strategy. The Islamic Government of Pakistan welcomed the Unified Action Plan for its focus on a whole-of-government approach to addressing challenges to sustainable reintegration and urged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to implement the plan, stressing the need for tangible action and outcomes. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan also urged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to allocate land suitable for settlement of returnees, in high return areas, with access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. Pakistan emphasized that effective border management is important for smooth implementation of the voluntary repatriation programme. Pakistan further urged the importance of immediate, concrete and tangible reintegration measures for the expected high returns during the remainder of 2016 owing to the enhanced repatriation grant.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of voluntary return in safety and dignity, provided an update on the extension of the validity of the PoR cards until the end of December 2016, and briefed on on-going discussions and the development of a plan with realistic timelines for phased voluntary return and management of Afghan nationals in Pakistan. In addition, the Government highlighted its support for youth empowerment through education and skills training as a key step towards empowering Afghans for voluntary return and sustainable reintegration. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan further confirmed its commitment to the policy for access to education to every child irrespective of his or her nationality, race or creed.

**The three parties to the Tripartite Agreement:**

1. Reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity, under the Tripartite Agreement to end the protracted Afghan refugee situation and urged that intensified efforts should be undertaken to create an enabling environment for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration;
2. Reaffirmed the commitment to uphold the letter and spirit of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), as a regional framework and platform for coordinated action to identify and implement lasting solutions for Afghan refugees;
3. *Underlined* the importance of implementing the Tripartite Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and UNHCR, as a platform for facilitating voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity, and enabling their sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan.
4. *Recognized* the generosity of the people of Pakistan in hosting millions of Afghan refugees for more than three decades, in line with the Islamic values of hospitality and generosity and *highlighted* the need for international solidarity, equitable responsibility-sharing, development investment and active engagement to help bring Afghanistan's refugee chapter to a close;

