



OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

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Women and the Kabul Conference Communiqué Celebration of success or time to strategise for the follow-up?

Will the women of Afghanistan now receive a fair share of the development aid, that will be channelled through Afghan government as agreed by the International Community in Kabul today?

After months of preparations, lobby and advocacy by Afghan women for representation and a voice in the Kabul Conference, today's historic event has yielded not only these two objectives, but has also added an acknowledgement of women's right to development and dignity, as reflected in the conference communiqué.

Women's representative Palwasha Hassan also represented civil society at large. She read out a statement jointly prepared by women's organisations and civil society groups.

In Afghanistan women's own, women-led organisations function the breadth and the length of the country. They are organised and have their own networks. Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is the largest network having a membership of 65 women's organisations. On the historic occasion of the Kabul Conference they have emerged as an organised, strategic and professional civil society platform that has effectively mobilized members in all provinces and brought together more than 200 women at a women's conference that took place on 17-18 July in Kabul.

The conference **Afghan Women's Movement from First Women's Council to Kabul Conference** was a joint event of Afghan Women's Network and Equality for Peace and Development in coordination with Ministry of Women's Affairs. The conference not only brought together women from throughout Afghanistan but it also succeeded in gathering together the top level leadership of Kabul Conference Organizers to sit down with them and listen to women's concerns. Amongst the main facilitators of the Kabul Conference were Dr. Ashraf Ghani who declared himself a true feminist, Stefan di Mistura, UN Envoy to Afghanistan and Minister of Finance, Dr. Omar Zakhilwal - who all emphasized the need for inclusion of women in all clusters proposed as plans within the national development strategy. Government and women's organisations, together with other national and international NGOs, discussed issues together. This inclusive methodology impacted positively on the drafting of the Kabul Communiqué which encourages women's contribution to security and development processes in Afghanistan.

It is critical that the Afghan government ensures women of Afghanistan receive their fair share of the development aid agreed by the international community. In the coming days and weeks, women's organizations will also need to produce a strategic follow-up plan and to take this opportunity to reaffirm their role and partnership in the development and security of Afghanistan.

End of the press release

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