Follow-up meeting on the Afghanistan-EU Human Rights Dialogue

Kabul, 30 November2016

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the European Union held a follow-up meeting on the Afghanistan-EU Human Rights Dialogue today, which was opened by H.E. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hekmat Karzai, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Ambassador Franz-Michael Mellbin European Union Special Representative and Head of Delegation to Afghanistan.

The Government informed of the many achievements that had been established and the important ongoing work to fulfil the agreed deliverables and indicators from the Human Rights Dialogue on 1 June. There was an open exchange of views on the human rights situation in Afghanistan and on cooperation between the EU and Afghanistan in the field of human rights and rule of law.

Constructive discussions were held on a range of issues, including women's rights, children's rights, torture, access to justice, freedom of expression and the rights of socially vulnerable and persons with disabilities. The EU welcomed some significant steps taken by the government in 2016, including the start of the implementation of the *National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security* and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Ombudsman in AIHRC.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan committed to implement its national and international obligations. This commitment is evident at the national level in the provisions of the democratically adopted Constitution of the country and in the various laws, policies and plans that have been enacted in accordance with the Constitution and the international obligations.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan reiterated its commitment to improve the human rights situation in Afghanistan and to launch the necessary judicial reforms. State report to UNCAT was finalized and sent to UN Office in Geneva. The Government has established EVAW Prosecution Units in 34 provinces. The Afghan Journalist Safety Committee was established under the chair of H.E. 2nd Vice President Danish. Furthermore the Government has sent an invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders for 2017.

The EU emphasised its commitment to help strengthen human rights and the rule of law in Afghanistan, and encouraged the Government of Afghanistan to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture as well as extending an official invitation to the ICC for cooperation and a visit to Afghanistan.

The next human rights dialogue is planned to be held in Kabul in May 2017.

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