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AFGHANISTAN MECHANISM FOR INCLUSIVE PEACE

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LIVING PRINCIPLES FOR AN INCLUSIVE AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS - CIVIL SOCIETY

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“LIVING PRINCIPLES” FOR AN INCLUSIVE PEACE PROCESS

Afghan civil society at large is concerned with the seeming willingness on the part of some of its allies in the International Community to allow achievements made in the past two decades, benefitting the Afghan population at large, to be sacrificed. These achievements include the respect for civil liberties, notably women’s rights, freedom of expression, the existing constitutional order, the building of institutions, the respect for rule of law, and equal opportunities for women and men in education and working spaces. It is key that these achievements, which were made through serious sacrifices in resources and lives by Afghans and our allies from around the world, are preserved.

The Living Principles are based on a summarizing of key documents on inclusive peace generated in Afghanistan over the past three years¹, and tested through initial consultations with over 150 civil society representatives, including religious leaders, women, youth, members of the diaspora, and victims from across Afghanistan², and an additional 17 Afghan diaspora representatives in Europe. As a result, representatives of Afghan civil society firmly believe that the securing of a *permanent ceasefire* and the laying down of an *inclusive peace process* are two fundamental requirements to making peace and finding a lasting political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

The purpose of Afghan civil society developing these “Living Principles” is to guide the negotiating parties, and all involved third parties, to focus on all the essential issues, mechanisms and negotiating principles that need to be put in place in order to bring about a permanent ceasefire, the restoration of regular public administration and services to the entire population, as well the return of Afghanistan to an orderly, peaceful and inclusive political transition.

Afghan civil society views an inclusive peace process as not simply the inclusion of elites and armed groups or the tokenism of unrepresentative women and other groups at the negotiating table. Afghan civil society views inclusion as legitimate representation at the table as well as participation in the formulation of the agenda points, issues of substance and approaches to negotiations, as well as the process and institutional arrangements.

¹ See Annex 1 for the list of documents reviewed and summarized.

² See Annex 2 below, a signed list of all participating CSOs from the initial consultations.

1. **Afghan civil society requests that the European Union use its political, diplomatic and financial resources to support the creation, establishment and implementation of concrete mechanisms within Afghan civil society, to ensure an inclusive peace process.**
2. **Afghan civil society request that the European Union act as a Guarantor for an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan in line with the “living principles” of process, substance and institutional support arrangements below.**

As regards *Process*, we ask that the peace process is designed to:

1. **Address** the use of violence for political ends through a practical and viable ceasefire, monitoring and verification measures that actively manage, reduce and bring a permanent end to the use of violence by conflict parties. The parties should make a firm and public commitment to stop using violence as a political negotiating strategy, so as to build public trust and confidence in the dialogue process, as well as create a safer environment to enable Afghans to economically rebuild their shattered economy as peace is being made.
2. **Recognise** as a matter of principle, fact and best practice that the most sustainable peace settlements are those that are inclusive involving all segments of society; include public codes of conduct that promote political goodwill, compromise through consensus, discourage inflammatory conduct by media and the presentation of undue preconditions to dialogue; have clear implementation plans supported by third party guarantors and monitors; and can call upon a set of regional and international contact groups, that include measures to deal with spoilers and hostile armed groups, while at the same time recognizing and addressing the legitimate concerns of neighbouring states.
3. **Provide** for the establishment of a culture of peacemaking and the ending of impunity within Afghanistan that broadens the spectrum for citizen participation and engagement that allows for the inputting of direct and digital submissions into the dialogue process by Afghan stakeholders, whether through civil society or track 1 mediators assigned to facilitate the process.
4. **Ensure** meaningful representation of women, youth, tribal, religious and marginalized voices within the dialogue process, whether through direct representations to the negotiating table, thematic working groups, victim’s testimony, the appointment of women’s, youth, victims and other ambassadors, or the creation of specialized advisory boards.
5. **Commit** to identify and deploy an appropriate process for the addressing of historical and current grievances and injustices perpetrated against victims during the conflict so as to ensure their non-repetition and counter impunity.
6. **Empower** civil society to support the negotiation process through advocacy, observation, surveying, audit, communication, knowledge transfer and monitoring mechanisms.

As regards *Substance*, we ask that any agreement reached within a peace process:

7. **Recognises** the principle of ‘constitutionalism’ to ensure that any changes to the political and social structure of Afghanistan agreed are both lawful and orderly implemented and that ultimate state

authority and power continues to reside with Afghan people. Any constitutional changes must be made through the recognized and existing constitutional procedures.

8. **Ensures** that any political and governance arrangement agreed to under any negotiation process on both the national and subnational level addresses the issue of good governance and includes measures that secure both respect for the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, as well as the transparent and accountable resource utilization.
9. **Protects** the normative values and rights enshrined in the Constitution concerning the protection and promotion of fundamental rights, including in relation to women rights and other marginalized and protected groups, so as to ensure that no reduction of rights can occur.
10. **Protects, promotes and preserves** the art and cultural rights, heritage and freedoms of expression – including in the media - throughout Afghanistan.
11. **Facilitates** the return, rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants from the battlefield through community based integration programmes, into cohesive local communities that can provide them and the local communities with work opportunities and a sustainable livelihood in such a way that does not fuel the war or illicit economy including the drugs trade.
12. **Provides** peace dividends to ordinary Afghans including through economic recovery and development programmes that create a stable basis to develop the economy for employment creation and provide for the return of IDPs and refugees and give redress to those whose rights have been violated during the conflict.
13. **Supports** human security and the institutional development of the country through the development of regular public finance and administration across the country. The implementation of Afghan sensitive anti-corruption policies, Security Sector Reform measures to address the new post peace deal composition of the ANSF under a national but locally owned peace programme.

As regards *Institutional Support*, we ask that the International Community

14. **Provides** moral, financial and institutional support to Afghan civil society so that it can help develop the aforesaid framework and set of Afghan “Living Principles” to enable civil society to promote an inclusive, transparent, sustainable, Afghan dialogue process on the ground capable of leading to a lasting settlement of the conflict both in Afghanistan and beyond.
15. **Ensures** that Afghan civil society has the resources to advocate, lobby, communicate, facilitate submissions and transfer civil society inputs and concerns, including transitional justice issues to all the parties at the negotiating table, and give feedback to Afghans, the diaspora and the international community, through an independent, structured, systematic and accountable mechanism. According to best practice and experience from other peace processes, this could be ensured through the setting up of an appropriate institutional Transfer Mechanism, independently resourced through a benign and neutral international funder.