

**Remarks at Opening Ceremony of the
Second leg of the 2nd India-China
Capacity Building Programme for
Afghan Diplomats**

**[December 5, 2019, China Foreign
Affairs University, Beijing]**

**(Delivered by Acquino Vimal, DCM,
Embassy of India, Beijing)**

Dr. Xu Jian, President of the China Foreign Affairs University
Mr. Yao Wen, Deputy Director General, Department of Asian Affairs, MFA
Mr. Musa Arefi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Afghanistan

Young diplomats from Afghanistan,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a pleasure to be here for the opening ceremony of second leg of the 2nd Joint India-China Capacity Building Programme for Afghan Diplomats.

Last year, we embarked on a new journey in conducting the first joint training of 10 Afghan diplomats in both India and China. I had the pleasure to attend the opening ceremony of the first edition of this programme in November 2018. Today, we are happy to participant in the 2nd edition of this programme with the second batch of Afghan diplomats.

I am sure our young Afghan colleagues would have had a memorable experience in Delhi last month in the first phrase of this programme. We were happy that President Dr Xu Jian also attended the

opening ceremony of this programme in Delhi.

I am told that the two week intensive programme at the Foreign Service Institute had elements of class room lectures as well as field visit. Hope you all had a good exposure to India and India's foreign policy as well as key international issues and diplomatic practices. I am confident that your course here in China would provide you an equally enriching exposure on diplomacy and China's foreign policy. While two weeks training either in India or in China is highly inadequate, but I am sure it would act as the necessary stimulus for you all to dive deep into the highly complex and engaging field of diplomacy and foreign policy. Practice of diplomacy cannot be replaced by any amount of class room teaching. But it can provide you the much needed useful skills, to tactfully handle international situations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year Afghanistan celebrated its 100th Independence Day. This year also witnessed significant developments related to democratic process in Afghanistan as well as peace process. We highly commend efforts of Afghan people in successfully conducting the Presidential elections on September 28, despite challenging security environment. We hope that the election results will contribute further to the inclusive democratic process in Afghanistan.

We also welcome all international, regional and domestic efforts towards bringing peace in Afghanistan. But we believe that this should be done with full consent and involvement of the Afghan people. No peace can be durable and sustainable, unless Afghan government, which is duly elected democratically by the people of Afghanistan, is at the centre of this effort. Let me reiterate that India stands firmly with the Afghan government for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process. Only such a solution can ensure stability in Afghanistan.

In addition, all peace efforts should build upon the gains of the last two decades and promote intra-Afghan reconciliation in an inclusive manner. An independent, sovereign, united, democratic, pluralistic and inclusive Afghanistan would be in the interest of diverse sections of Afghan society as well as for the international community. India is keen and willing to engage with Afghanistan bilaterally as well as multilaterally, in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

India and Afghanistan share a strong relationship based on historical, trade and cultural links dating back to several millennia.

Post 2001, our development assistance to Afghanistan has been done in active consultation with the government of Afghanistan. As on date, our developmental assistance has crossed 3 billion US\$. We have focused on projects related to economic

development, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and capacity building. They also include large scale projects such as Zaranj Delaram road, Salma dam, Afghan National Parliament building in Kabul, Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul transmission line, restoration of telecommunication network, to name a few. We have also completed more than 400 social infrastructure projects and another 150 in the coming months.

Connectivity is another important component of our relationship. We are actively involved in various connectivity projects in the region in providing a reliable connectivity for land-locked Afghanistan, such as direct India-Afghanistan air freight corridor and the Chabahar port, which have been successfully operationalized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are hopeful of undertaking more joint projects with China in Afghanistan. Few more projects are being actively considered and confident that we would be able to implement them next year.

Let me thank China Foreign Affairs University and the Government of People's Republic of China for hosting this programme and wish all Afghan diplomats the very best for this programme.
