

**SECOND MEETING OF JOINT WORKING GROUP ON  
TRADE, COMMERCE AND INVESTMENT  
BETWEEN INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN  
HELD AT NEW DELHI ON 29<sup>TH</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2017**

**AGREED MINUTES**

The Second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment between India and Afghanistan, at Commerce Secretary level, was held at New Delhi on 29-30 March, 2017.

2. The Indian delegation was led by Ms Rita Teatota, Commerce Secretary, Government of India and the Afghan delegation was led by Mr. Mohammad Qurban Haqjo, Deputy Minister for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industries, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

3. The lists of the members of the two delegations are at **Annex- I & II**.

4. The leader of the Indian delegation, Ms. Rita Teatota extended a warm welcome to the Afghan delegation. She highlighted the numerous high level visits between the two countries, signifying the importance being attached to the bilateral relations. She noted the low level of bilateral trade between the two countries and highlighted the huge potential which exists for enhancing trade. She identified pharmaceutical products from India to Afghanistan as one of potential products of export. She appreciated the efforts undertaken by Afghanistan for inclusion of India in expanded Afghanistan Pakistan Transit and Trade Agreement (APTTA) which would resolve the lack of transit facility. She noted several other steps being taken to facilitate trade between the two countries such as establishment of air freight corridor, development of Chabahar port and establishment of new liberal visa regime. She reiterated India's support to Afghanistan on providing assistance relating to WTO matters.

5. The Leader of the Afghan delegation, Mr Mohammad Qurban Haqjo appreciated the warm hospitality extended by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and for hosting this Joint Working Group Meeting in New Delhi. He mentioned India's technical and financial support during the last decade in the socio-economic development of Afghanistan. India's assistance in sectors, such as trade, health, agriculture, governance reform, infrastructure and transportation, has resulted in tangible progress for Afghan people. He stated that Afghanistan will definitely see the huge impact of Indian assistance during the journey towards economic transformation. He sought technical support for Afghanistan to become part of supply chain for SAARC nations. He additionally focused on transit facility which will provide alternative to, and reduce the dependence of Afghanistan on, some ports. The trilateral agreement with India and Iran (Chabahar Agreement) will enable Afghanistan to access the Arabian Sea through Iran, and will raise its potential to

stimulate more investment from trade with regional players and India. He explained existing investment opportunities in the strategic sectors including: Industry/small manufacturing, Agriculture, Mining, Energy and Services. He also acknowledged Indian policy coherence and its honest approach and depth of solidarity on development at the regional level which is indeed paramount in engagement with Afghanistan for a mutually beneficial and successful economic transformation. He expressed the hope for result oriented outcomes of the second JWG in the areas of Trade, Commerce and Investment for India and Afghanistan, for the benefit of the entire region.

6. Both sides discussed and adopted the agenda at **Annex-III**.

## 7. Review of Bilateral Trade

7.1 The Indian side made a brief presentation on bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan. It was informed that the trade since 2007-08 has progressed as shown below:-

Year	In US\$ Million		
	Exports to Afghanistan	Imports from Afghanistan	Total Bilateral Trade
2007-08	249.21	109.97	359.18
2008-09	394.23	126.24	520.47
2009-10	463.55	125.19	588.74
2010-11	422.41	146.03	568.44
2011-12	510.90	133.03	643.94
2012-13	472.63	159.55	632.18
2013-14	474.34	208.77	683.10
2014-15	422.56	261.91	684.47
2015-16	526.60	307.90	834.50
2015-2016(Apr-Jan)	460.97	264.04	725.00
2016-2017(Apr-Jan) (P)	423.99	252.33	676.32

The importance of bilateral trade for both India and Afghanistan and the top 10 products of import and export were highlighted. It was also noted that the majority of the imports from Afghanistan are under preferential route and utilise the SAFTA concessions.

7.2 The Indian side requested for data on India's utilization of preferential routes under the India-Afghanistan PTA and SAFTA. Both sides agreed to share such data with each other.

7.3 Both sides also noted the current status of bilateral trade and expressed commitment to enhance trade and other economic cooperation between the two countries.

**8. Review of progress on the Agreed Minutes of First meeting of India-Afghanistan Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment.**

The progress on the Agreed Minutes of the first meeting of Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment between India and Afghanistan held on 28th January 2014 at Kabul was reviewed. The status of various issues, and the decisions thereon, are reflected in **Annex- IV**.

**9. Other bilateral trade issues were then taken up for discussion.**

**10. The Indian side raised the following issues:**

**10.1 Transit issues**

Both sides agreed that the lack of transit facilities is hampering India's exports to Afghanistan.

The Indian side noted that the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) is sought to be expanded to include other countries also. India has already formally expressed its interest in joining the expanded successor agreement of APTTA and Afghan Government has supported it. While the Indian side appreciated the efforts being made by Afghanistan on this issue, it was requested that Afghanistan may further facilitate inclusion of India under expanded APTTA, as it would have positive effect on bilateral trade. The Indian side informed that India has agreed to join the TIR Convention. The Indian side reiterated its support to Afghanistan on receiving the Afghan trucks directly at ICP Attari and informed that the bilateral motor vehicle agreement, which would facilitate such movement, and whose text has been finalised, is expected to be signed soon after internal approvals.

The Afghan side informed that Afghanistan views India as an important trade partner. The Afghan side recalled that in the First meeting of the Joint Working Group both sides had agreed to work towards extension of APTTA to India. The Afghan side informed that the issue will be raised in future meetings related to APTTA.

Both sides acknowledged that being members of the WTO, each country is entitled to fully utilize transit provisions enshrined in Article V of GATT.

Both sides also observed that Afghanistan being a land locked country has legitimate rights for transit to boost its trade under Article V. Besides, with the entry into force of Trade Facilitation Agreement, this right is further strengthened and therefore the Afghan side requested India for technical and legal assistance to pursue its right of transit under Article V of GATT and under the relevant provisions of TFA in various forums of WTO. This was agreed to by the Indian side.

## 10.2 Chabahar related issues

The Indian side stated that the development of Chabahar port would provide an alternative route for facilitating the transit of cargo to and from Afghanistan. It was noted that the Trilateral Agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan on Chabahar port was signed in May 2016. The Indian side also expressed support for development of transit infrastructure which will lead to better utilisation of the route. It was also requested that Afghanistan may also identify the ways and means to utilise the facilities offered by the port.

The Afghan side agreed on the importance of Chabahar port as a viable opportunity for its trade relations not only with India but many other regional countries. The Afghan side specifically requested the Indian side for investment in Chabahar port. The Indian side informed that India is developing two berths at Chabahar port with a credit support of USD 150 million. The Indian side also informed that Indian wheat assistance of approximately 130,000 MT is proposed to be shipped to Afghanistan through Chabahar port. This shipment when effected would demonstrate the feasibility of trade through Chabahar port.

The Afghan side suggested a shipping facility between Mumbai and Chabahar ports that could be utilized by exporters and importers of both countries for shipping cargo. The Indian side suggested that it would facilitate a meeting between freight forwarders of both countries who can then work out the economic feasibility and arrange the requisite dedicated shipping facility.

The Afghan side proposed utilization of Afghan labour in Chabahar port. The Afghan side also requested for technical and non-technical training for Afghan labour in port related services. The Afghan side proposed establishment of a research center in Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) and capacity building for MoLSAMD employees. The Indian side agreed to examine and revert.

## 10.3 Issues related to visas for Indian businessmen

The Indian side informed that a new visa regime has been introduced under which business visas for long duration, between 1- 5 years with continuous stay of 180 days; are being issued to Afghanistan businessmen with genuine and established credentials. For smaller businessmen/traders the validity of Business visas is upto 6 months. It was also informed that a number of such visas have been issued.

The Indian side also highlighted difficulties being faced by Indian businessmen as they face issues such as long processing time and issue of only a single entry Business visa. The Indian side requested Afghan side to issue multiple entry visas of 1-5 years duration for Indian businessmen.

The Afghan side stated that they will consider providing the same visa regime for Indian Businessmen.

#### **10.4 Direct sourcing of rough gemstones**

The Indian side mentioned that India requires large amount of rough gemstones for its Gems and Jewellery industry. Currently, these gemstones of Afghan origin are being sourced from third countries, in view of the absence of direct trade of gemstones. The Indian side requested Afghanistan to consider sale of gemstones directly to India through organisations such as Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion council (GJEPC) and offered to provide support for facilitating such trade.

The Afghan side informed that the Indian request shall be discussed with relevant authorities. The Afghan side requested the Indian side to meanwhile encourage Indian businesses in this sector to invest in processing of gemstones in Afghanistan, so that India's experience & expertise can be helpful in developing this important sector. The Indian side suggested that a buyer-seller meet could be arranged in either of the two countries.

#### **10.5 Procurement of medicines from Indian Companies**

The Indian side mentioned that India has a strong pharmaceutical sector which can provide high quality medicines at affordable price to Afghanistan. For this purpose a high level Afghanistan delegation visited India to study the possibility of Afghan Government procuring its medicines from reputed Indian companies, for strengthening the commercial linkages between India and Afghanistan in pharmaceutical sector, through participation by Indian companies in the pooled procurement contracts, supply to the private players in the Afghan market and establishing pharmaceutical production plants in Afghanistan. The Indian side requested for an update on the pooled procurement contracts. The Afghan side stated that Afghanistan is preparing for pooled procurement, and Afghanistan looks forward to leading Indian enterprises participating in the competitive process.

The Indian side also requested Afghanistan to consider simplifying the procedures for import of medicines, especially drawing samples before clearance. It was observed that the delays due to lack of technical personnel at key ports for testing of samples are resulting in high transaction costs. The Afghan side agreed to address the issue at the earliest.

The Afghan side requested for enhancement of the capacity of quality control systems and establishment of quality management infrastructure for food and pharmaceuticals safety.

The Indian side informed that Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has shared a draft MoU with National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA) Afghanistan. The Indian side requested Afghanistan to provide comments on the draft MoU for its early finalisation.

## **10.6 Cooperation in sectors such as renewable energy and power**

The Indian side observed that there are several opportunities for cooperation in energy sector. It was informed that India is ready to offer assistance to Afghanistan in the development of Renewable Power Projects, including Hydroelectric Projects. It was also informed that technical cooperation may also be extended for Re-assessment of Renewable Power Potential and its development, preparation of Regulations & Best Practices for Power Generation, Detailed Project Reports, Design & Engineering, supply, erection & commissioning of the Power Projects, and Training of Afghan Power Engineers.

The Afghan side appreciated the suggestions and agreed to share the information with Ministry of Energy and Water and revert back with specific proposals.

## **10.7 Any other issue:**

### **Line of credit facility**

The Indian side mentioned that a USD 50 million Line of Credit was extended to Afghanistan for export of goods and services and project exports in 2011. However, Afghanistan has not sought any utilisation of this Line of Credit. The Indian side informed that since review of the Line of Credit is being contemplated, Afghanistan could quickly identify projects for effective utilisation of the facility.

The Afghan side stated that they would revert soon if Afghanistan would be utilizing the facility.

## **11. The Afghan side raised the following issues:**

### **11.1 Development of air freight corridor and Bilateral air services agreement**

The Afghan side informed that it envisages increase the frequency of Air flights for passengers and cargo between India and Afghanistan as well as increase in the ports of call. In this context it requested additional slots for Afghan carriers to India. The Indian side informed it would revert on the request.

The Afghan side also requested that the proposed MoU on Expedited Freight Transportation between the two countries should be signed at the earliest. The Indian side informed that the draft MoU is under examination and would revert.

### **11.2 Issues related to Customs cooperation.**

The Afghan side proposed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Customs to Customs cooperation.

Both sides agreed to consider an Memorandum of Understanding on Customs to Customs cooperation, covering areas of mutual interest, including but not limited to:

1. Electronic Data Exchange.
2. Technical Assistance and Capacity building.
3. Customs laws and procedures awareness programs for traders.

The Afghan side agreed to provide a draft text of the MoU.

### **11.3 Issues and capacity development in the field of standards**

The Afghan side requested assistance for the establishment of a training and information center and support for capacity building programs in the areas of standards, quality and conformity assessment.

The Indian side expressed willingness to consider cooperation in this regard and requested for specific proposals. It conveyed that the possibility of organising such trainings under ITEC programme shall be explored. It was mentioned that an MoU between Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, is under consideration. The MoU proposes training, capacity building and sharing of information. The Indian side informed that FSSAI would revert with its counter text of the MoU by 15th April 2017.

The Afghan side requested that an MoU may be considered for execution between Afghan National Standards Authority and the concerned Indian agency. The Indian side requested for a specific proposal.

### **11.4 Issues and capacity development in agriculture and livestock sector.**

The Afghan side identified scope for investments focused on establishment of greenhouses and processing units for fruits, vegetables and livestock products. The Indian side agreed to arrange business to business meetings between Afghan and Indian Industries Associations and other potential investors based on specific proposals.

The Afghan side requested for deputation of experts for FAO's Global Agriculture Statistics Strategy. The Indian side agreed to revert.

The Afghan side recalled the cooperation in agriculture and livestock sector and expressed their desire to take it further by soliciting assistance in pre-fabricated solar cold storages each with the capacity of 200 to 250 MT and also requested assistance in equipping plant and animal quarantine laboratories in Afghanistan's Customs and ports.

The Afghan side requested for capacity building programs including Certification programs in specific areas in post harvest management and quarantines. The Indian side observed that these issues and proposals could be referred to the existing India-Afghanistan Task Force on Agriculture for consideration.

### **11.5 Issues related to transportation**

The Afghan side requested for early supply of 1000 buses and to construct related maintenance facility, cooperation for revival of trolley bus and to enhance capacity of Milli bus staff in logistics and technical operation.

The Indian side informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for supply of buses to Afghanistan and development of depot infrastructure works has been prepared.

However, some of the technical specifications were found to be at variance with previous discussion and these have been shared with Afghan side for comments, which are awaited. The Afghan side was requested to expedite the comments so that DPR can be finalized. The Indian side would thereafter examine the proposal expeditiously.

#### **11.6 Issues and capacity development in public health**

The Afghan side proposed the establishment of mechanism to speed up the process of issuing visas for severe patients. It suggested that certification through one or two pre-selected hospital can be one option to ease the process. The Indian side informed that for critically ill patients there exists the facility of emergency visas which are issued by Indian embassy and consulates in Afghanistan.

The Afghan side raised the issue of building the capacity of Afghan health professionals. The Indian side informed that it would facilitate such capacity building and made a request for specific proposals in this regard.

The Afghan side also proposed the establishment of an Indian hospital in Kabul through public-private mechanism to provide speciality health services in Afghanistan. The Afghan side stated that Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan is committed to provide necessary support including land, buildings and legal enabling environment for Indian investors. The Indian side noted the request.

#### **11.7 Cooperation in mining sector**

The Afghan side requested for training on contract management, facilitating the B2B matchmaking and creating awareness about existing investment opportunities in Afghanistan.

The Indian side requested that a Joint Working Group (JWG) may be formed as envisaged in the MoU signed by the Mining Ministers of both countries for cooperation in the mineral sector in 2011, which can be used as an effective platform to address all the issues relating to further engagement and cooperation at all levels.

#### **11.8 Assistance in Trade and investment issues**

The Afghan side sought India's support so as to become part of regional and global supply chain and also start producing high value added products. The Afghan side requested for assistance in establishing a Trade and Investment Institute to train the government staff, economic and commercial diplomats of Afghanistan. The institute will have its own curriculum, designed to meet the current and future needs of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) as it engages with the international trade related institutions at the regional and global scale and to enhance the institutional capacity of MoCI staff over WTO post-accession commitments implementation. The Afghan side also requested assistance in building capacity of





Afghan policy makers in making effective trade policy and to have regular exchange of policy makers and private sector representatives.



The Afghan side also requested for technical assistance for the development of investment strategy and learn from India experience in improving competitiveness in ease of doing business.

The Indian side requested for specific proposals.

The Afghan side requested for assistance in construction of cargo zone in Hamid Karzai International Airport. The Indian side informed that its Embassy in Kabul has received a proposal in this connection, which is under examination.

12. The meeting was held in a warm and cordial atmosphere.

13. It was agreed that next meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment between India and Afghanistan would be held in Kabul on mutually agreed dates decided through Diplomatic Channels.

 <p><b>(Rita Teatia)</b> <b>Commerce Secretary,</b> <b>Ministry of Commerce &amp; Industry,</b> <b>Government of India</b></p>	 <p><b>(Mohammad Qurban Haqjo)</b> <b>Deputy Minister for Commerce,</b> <b>Ministry of Commerce &amp; Industries,</b> <b>Government of Islamic Republic of</b> <b>Afghanistan</b></p>
---	---

**New Delhi,**  
**Dated the 29-30 March, 2017**

**INDIAN DELEGATION:**

1. Ms. Rita Teatota, Commerce Secretary  
**(Leader of the Delegation)**
2. Mr. Bhupinder S. Bhalla, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce
3. Ms. Ravneet Kaur, Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
4. Shri Sagar Mehra, Joint Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries
5. Shri Viraj Singh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Kabul.
6. Ms. Anice Chandra, Director (TPD), Department of Commerce
7. Shri Rakesh Ch. Sharma, Director, Food Safety & Standards Authority of India
8. Shri Prithul Kumar, Director, Ministry of Mines.
9. Shri H.K. Suanthang, Director, Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare
10. Shri P.C. Kureel, Chief Engineer, Ministry of Power
11. Dr. Ashish Kumar, Senior Development Officer, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
12. Shri Anurag Sharma, Deputy Secretary, Department of Commerce
13. Shri A.D. James, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
14. Shri J. Roy Chowdhury, Head International Relations, Bureau of Indian Standards
15. Shri Janesh Kain, Deputy Secretary (PAI), Ministry of External Affairs
16. Dr. A.K. Sinha, Plant Protection Adviser, Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine & Storage
17. Ms. Temsunaro Jamir, Under Secretary (CBEC), Ministry of Finance
18. Shri S. Buchchan, Under Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
19. Sh. V.S. Pandey, Under Secretary, Department of Commerce
20. Ms. S B Nanda, Under Secretary, Department of Commerce
21. Shri S. Muthukumar, Under Secretary, Department of Commerce
22. Mr. Atul Kumar Pandey, Section Officer, Department of Commerce
23. Mr. Aashish Chhawal, Assistant Section Officer, Department of Commerce

## AFGHANISTAN DELEGATION

1. Mr. Mohammad Qurban Haqjo, Deputy Minister for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industries (**Head of delegation**)
2. Mr. Sayed Mujtaba Ahmadi, Deputy Director General, First Political Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Ahmad Shoaib Habibi, Economic Counselor, Embassy of I. R. of Afghanistan, New Delhi, India
4. Ahmad Tariq Sediqi, Acting Deputy Minister for Admin and Finance, Ministry of Higher Education
5. Dr. Abdul Qadir Qadir, Director General of Plan and Policy Ministry of Public Health
6. Mr. Abdullah Barakzai, Acting Director General, Policy and Planning, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
7. Mr. Mahboobullah Iltaf, Acting Director General of Plan and Program, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
8. Mr. Abdul Qayom Pazhwok, Chief of Staff, Afghanistan National Standard
9. Mr. Mohammad Wahid Noori, Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education
10. Capt. Mohammad Nader Omar, President Ariana Afghan Airlines
11. Mr. Mohammad HaidarAtmar, Chief of Milie Bus Enterprise, Ministry of transport and civil aviation
12. Mr. Shamroz Khan Masjidi, Operation Director, General Directorate of Customs, Ministry of Finance
13. Mr. Fareed Ahmad Kazimi, Acting Director, Policy, Ministry of Mines and petroleum
14. Mr. Jamal Shah Stanekzai, Head of Bilateral Trade Agreements Department, Ministry of Commerce and Industries
15. Mr. Abdul Naseer Rameen, Head of Rules and Treaties Department, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
16. Mr. Hamid Jamal, employee of Political Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
17. Mr. Abdul Karim Malikyar, Head of WTO Section, Ministry of Commerce and Industries
18. Mr. Masjedi Saberi, Senior Technical Assistant, Bilateral Trade Agreements Department, Ministry of Commerce and Industries
19. Mr. ZabihYousufi, Technical Advisor to Deputy Minister of Trade Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and industries
20. Mr. Habibullah Khan, Technical Advisor to Deputy Minister of Trade Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Industries
21. Mr. Nisar Ahmad Masoud, Regional Trade Advisor in Ministry of Commerce and Industries

**Second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment with Afghanistan at the level of Commerce Secretary  
29<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 at New Delhi**

**Agenda**

1. Opening remarks and adoption of the Agenda
2. Review of bilateral trade
3. Review of the progress on the Minutes of the first meeting India-Afghanistan Commerce Security level JWG Trade, Commerce & Investment on held on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 at Kabul.
4. **Bilateral trade issues**

**(Issues proposed to be discussed by India)**

- a. Transit Issues.
- b. Chabahar related issues.
- c. Issues related to visas for Indian businessmen.
- d. Direct sourcing of rough gemstones.
- e. Procurement of medicines from Indian Companies.
- f. Cooperation in sectors such as renewable energy and power
- g. Any other issue

**(Issues proposed to be raised by Afghanistan)**

- a. Development of air freight corridor and Bilateral air services agreement.
  - b. Issues related to Customs cooperation.
  - c. Issues and capacity development in the field of standards.
  - d. Issues and capacity development in agriculture and livestock sector.
  - e. Issues related to transportation.
  - f. Issues and capacity development in public health.
  - g. Cooperation in mining sector.
  - h. Assistance in Trade and Investment issues.
  - i. Any other issue
5. Drafting of Agreed minutes
  6. Signing of the Minutes
  7. Closing Remarks

ANNEX-IV

Issue	Deliberations/Minutes of the meeting	Present status
<p><b>1. Review of bilateral trade</b></p>	<p>Both sides noted that bilateral trade at USD 632.18 million for 2012-13 (USD 472.63 million exports by India and USD 159.55 million exports by Afghanistan) is not commensurate to its actual potential. Both sides noted that the trade potential can be unlocked if the Wagah-Attari route is opened for bilateral trade with Afghanistan.</p> <p>Both sides noted that successful operation of the Chabahar port in Iran would boost the bilateral trade.</p>	<p>The issue is linked to the extension of Afghanistan Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement (APTTA) to India. Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>
<p><b>2. Trade Disputes</b></p>	<p>The Afghan Side informed about certain incidents of alleged malpractices by Indian traders who failed to supply goods/refund the amount after taking full/advance payments.</p>	<p>The Indian side informed that no specific cases of such nature are pending. It was also informed that issues which are brought to notice are immediately taken up for resolution in consultation with concerned authorities.</p>

	<p>The Indian side agreed to examine the cases to facilitate the resolution of the trade disputes.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to work towards extension of APTTA to India which will facilitate flow of goods to/from Afghanistan via Wagah route.</p> <p>The Indian Side agreed to examine the issue of allowing containerized cargo originating from Afghanistan with one time customs lock up to ICD Amritsar, India in consultation with stakeholders i.e. Department of Revenue, MHA etc.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to expedite finalization of SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement.</p>	<p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p> <p>The issue is linked to the movement of Afghan trucks, transiting through Pakistan, directly upto ICP Attari. The Indian side supported the proposal and informed that it can be facilitated once the issue of direct access of Afghan trucks to ICP Attari is resolved.</p> <p>In view of the difficulties in finalizing multilateral SAARC Motor Vehicle Agreement, both countries are negotiating a bilateral motor vehicle agreement. Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda. It was noted that India, Afghanistan and Iran have signed the Trilateral Transit Agreement in May 2016.</p>
<p><b>3. Transit Agreement/Alternate Routes</b></p>		

	<p>Both sides noted the importance of Chahbahar route in promoting bilateral trade and agreed to cooperate in development of Chahbahar port and associated logistics facilities. Both sides agreed to expedite the process of finalizing a Trilateral Transit Agreement between Afghanistan, India and Iran.</p>	
<p><b>4. Visa issues to facilitate trade and economic cooperation</b></p>	<p>The Indian side highlighted the difficulties encountered in the issue of visa to Indian businessmen/professionals. The Afghan side also highlighted the difficulties in getting long term Multi-entry Business Visas. Both sides agreed to take up the issue with concerned authorities so as to establish a liberal visa regime which would facilitate trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.</p>	<p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>

<p><b>5. Air Services Agreement (ASA)</b></p>	<p>Both sides noted the need to revise the ASA to improve the air connectivity by increasing the frequency of flights and commencing cargo flights. Both sides exhorted the concerned Ministries to expedite signing of the revised ASA. The Afghan side offered to associate Indian side in carrying out joint security checks at the airport terminals.</p>	<p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>
<p><b>6. Issue of Plant Quarantine Notification for Afghan Walnut Exports to India</b></p>	<p>The Afghan side projected the requirement for the issue of Plant Quarantine Notification by Indian Ministry of Agriculture. The Indian side agreed to expedite the issue of the said notification.</p>	<p>The Indian side informed that a notification for import of Walnut from Afghanistan to India was published in the Gazette of India on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. As per the notification Fumigation with Methyl bromide at 16 g/ m3 for 24hrs at 21oC and above under NAP or by any other fumigant/substance in the manner approved by the Plant Protection Adviser for this purpose. The treatment should be endorsed on Phytosanitary certificate issued at the Country of origin/re-export.</p>
<p><b>7. Customs Duty Exemption for Government Aided Projects</b></p>	<p>The Indian side stated that the customs duties are being charged for the goods/consignments brought</p>	<p>The Indian side noted that the Afghan side had indeed granted exemption from payment of customs duty for Government of India funded Projects such as Salma Dam and New Afghan</p>



<p>for the Government of India aided projects and requested that the same should be exempted from customs duties in cases where the Bill of Lading/Airways Bill is in the name of concerned contractor/company. The Indian side agreed to provide requisite documents in the pending cases to Afghan customs department. The Afghan side agreed to positively consider the request of the Indian side in all cases pertaining to the ongoing development projects with the aid of Government of India. The Indian side requested the Afghan side to issue a general exemption of customs duties for all the projects funded by the Government of India. The Afghan side agreed to examine the issue after the receipt of such request from the Indian Embassy, Kabul.</p>	<p>Parliament Complex. However, in some instances, the contractors had paid the custom duties keeping in view the time constraints for clearances, during times of executing critical activities and on account of work exigencies.</p> <p>The Indian side requested the Afghan side to consider issuing a general exemption of customs duties for all the projects funded by the Government of India.</p> <p>The Afghan side informed that both countries can enter into an agreement on this issue, on the line of such agreements between Afghanistan and other countries.</p> <p>The Indian side requested for sharing the text of the agreement with a view to finalise and sign the agreement at the earliest.</p> <p>The Afghan side agreed to provide a draft text of the agreement.</p>
---	--

<p><b>8. Contract to Hajigak Iron Ore Project</b></p>	<p>Both sides noted that enactment of enabling mining law would result in early finalization of the contract. The Afghan side agreed to take appropriate action at the earliest.</p>	<p>The Indian side informed that there are concerns on the viability of the project on account of precarious security situation, lack of rail/road infrastructure for evacuation of iron ore and steep decline in the steel prices. It was also informed that the project is being reviewed. The Afghan side informed that the pending contracts, including Hajigak Project are being renegotiated.</p>
<p><b>9. Line of Credit Facility</b></p>	<p>9.1 The Indian side stated that the EXIM bank in association with the Department of Commerce offers a line of credit known as Buyer's Credit for the Projects Exports by the Indian entities. The Indian side requested the Afghan side to identify suitable projects so as to avail Buyer's Credit scheme of EXIM bank. The Afghan side agreed to examine the feasibility of utilizing the Buyer's Credit scheme for suitable projects.</p>	<p>This was noted by the Indian side.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>

	<p>9.2 On the issue of operationalisation of the already pledged USD 50 million Line of Credit (LOC), the Indian side noted that revised formats for letter of comfort have been forwarded to the Afghan Ministry of Finance. The Afghan side agreed to respond on the issue at the earliest.</p>	
<p><b>10. Medical Tourism</b></p>	<p>10.1 The Afghan side informed about alleged incidents of Afghan patients, who travel to India for medical treatment, being harassed by interpreters/middlemen and also reported about alleged malpractices by certain hospitals in India.</p> <p>10.2 The Indian side requested the Afghan side to provide specific details of such reported malpractices. The Indian side promised to examine the allegations.</p>	<p>The Indian side informed that no specific instance has been provided to be taken up with concerned hospitals. However, it appears that such instances are rare. It was suggested that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi may liaison with major hospitals which are preferred and visited by Afghans to prevent such incidents.</p> <p>The Indian side also informed that Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) maintains a website which provides all the details required for facilitating the medical treatment in India, including the list of NABH accredited hospitals. The details can be accessed at</p>

		<p><a href="http://www.indiahealthcaretourism.com">http://www.indiahealthcaretourism.com</a>.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>
<p><b>11. Investment Promotion</b></p>	<p>11.1 Both sides agreed that private sector development in Afghanistan can transform its economy from an aid dependent to a self-reliant economy and identified investment opportunities in sectors like mining, agribusiness, education, healthcare, energy, textiles, construction, banking and insurance. The Indian side assured to push the agenda through Indian business chambers.</p>	<p>The Indian side informed that currently there is no Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) between India and Afghanistan. A revised model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) text has been approved by the Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. An investment protection agreement would encourage the private sector to make further investments in both countries.</p> <p><b>Invest India</b>, a JV between DIPP and FICCI and State Governments, acts as a first reference point for doing business in India, guide investors on all policy and regulatory issues, and provide handholding services to investors. The investors from Afghanistan should take advantage of this facility to invest and increase their business in India.</p> <p>Business Chambers have taken several initiatives such as facilitating Afghan participation in Buyer-sellers meet and exhibitions, creating linkages at B2B level and organising Afghanistan specific events such as “Doing Business with Afghanistan” and “Made</p>

	<p>11.2 The Indian side stated that Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) under the DOC would be the nodal agency which can provide the requisite expertise in promoting the development of exports in the agricultural sector.</p>	<p>in Afghanistan” for promoting trade and investment in Afghanistan. The Afghan side also stated that Afghan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry are also cooperating for investment protection and investment support.</p> <p>APEDA has reiterated its commitment to be the nodal agency to provide requisite expertise in promoting and developing Afghan exports in agricultural sector.</p> <p>Both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>
--	--	---

	<p>11.3 The India side stated that the use of solar water pumps by the small and marginal farmers and use of renewable energy to overcome the power shortage could be the potential area for cooperation.</p>	
<p><b>12. Training and Capacity Building</b></p>	<p>12.1 The Afghan side stated the need for following training/capacity building assistance from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and capacity building for Afghans in the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).</li> <li>• Training for Afghan National Standard Authority (ANSA) officials based on the signed MOU between ANSA and BIS; technical support for the establishment of product certification in ANSA for the major goods of export interest to Afghanistan.</li> </ul>	<p>The Indian side informed as follows:</p> <p>Training has been provided to a number of trainees from Afghanistan and further training may be provided, if requested.</p> <p>A request was received from ANSA in November, 2014 for organizing training programme on lead Auditor Course on Quality Management Systems for their officials at the training institute of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) i.e. National Institute for Testing and Standardization (NITS), Noida. The modalities and the cost involved for participating in the training were communicated to ANSA. However, subsequently, ANSA requested to organize the training programme in Afghanistan which could not be worked out.</p>

Under the activities of South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO), BIS has announced the hosting of training programmes on Standardization and Quality control and on Laboratory Quality Management Systems during December, 2014 and in December, 2015 for which no participant was nominated by ANSA.

Such training programmes can be supported for Afghanistan.

The following trainings were conducted for Afghanistan:

S. No.	Name of the Program	Date	No. of programs
1	Five Day workshop on "SAFE And AEO".	05-09 January, 2015	1
2	"Modernisation of Customs" for SAARC countries	09-13 March, 2015	3
3	Programme Global Shield	04-05 August,	6

- Training and capacity building of customs officials, academy to academy cooperation in training and signing of customs cooperation agreement.

	(PGS) Operational Coordination Meeting.	2015	
4	WCO workshop on Counterfeiting and Piracy.	16-20 May, 2016	1
5	WCO workshop on Compliance and Enforcement Package.	20-24 June, 2016	1
6	WCO A/P Regional Workshop	21-25 November, 2016	1
7	WCO Regional Workshop on Digital Customs and E- Commerce	12-16 December, 2016	1
8	Train The Trainers Workshop to combat illegal	21-23 December, 2016	3



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and capacity building for Trade Policy Unit of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries.</li> <li>• Deputation of Indian specialists in the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture for capacity development in various sectors.</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="191 896 287 1019"></td> <td data-bbox="191 616 287 896">Trade in HCFCs</td> <td data-bbox="191 392 287 616"></td> <td data-bbox="191 168 287 392"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="287 896 335 1019"></td> <td data-bbox="287 616 335 896"></td> <td data-bbox="287 392 335 616"><b>Total</b></td> <td data-bbox="287 168 335 392"><b>17</b></td> </tr> </table>		Trade in HCFCs					<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>
	Trade in HCFCs									
		<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>							
<p>No specific proposal was received in this regard. However, both sides agreed to discuss this issue as part of the main agenda.</p>		<p>The Indian side stated that during September, 2016 a request was received from the Afghan Agriculture Minister for deployment of technical experts to expedite the FAO's Global Agriculture Statistics Strategy in Afghanistan.</p>								