

U.S. Department of Commerce and the Afghanistan Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Joint Statement on Commercial Cooperation

On the occasion of discussions between the Secretary of Commerce of the United States of America, Carlos M. Gutierrez, and the Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Afghanistan, Dr. Mir Muhammad Amin Farhang, on enhancing cooperation between the Department of Commerce (DOC) of the United States of America and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) of the Republic of Afghanistan (hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”);

Noting the commercial needs and objectives of the Republic of Afghanistan, and in particular its goal to create an environment conducive to economic reform, development of the private sector in Afghanistan, and development of private and public organizations that support trade development;

Desiring to enhance the commercial relationship between the United States of America and the Republic of Afghanistan on the basis of mutual benefit within the framework of their respective laws and regulations; and

Wishing to strengthen their cooperation through the establishment of a framework for continued consultation;

The Parties have created the following Work Plan:

Priority Issues

- I. Promote exports and investment in the Afghan rugs, dried fruits and nuts, and mining sectors, in collaboration, to the extent appropriate, with the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan and the Afghan Investment Support Agency;
- II. Assist in developing linkages between Afghanistan’s agribusiness sector and foreign agribusiness entities to facilitate agricultural export production and trade;
- III. Facilitate access to capital for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Afghanistan and develop linkages between international financial services providers and Afghanistan;
- IV. Consult on the review and reform of Afghanistan’s commercial regulations, policies and practices to promote private sector development, trade and investment. These reforms include streamlining the system of business (trade) licensing;

- V. Consult on the establishment of appropriate standards, policies and technical committees within the newly created Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA), including a technical regulations inspectorate and metrology laboratories.
- VI. Establish a forum for the exchange of information on commercial matters including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Commercial and investment opportunities;
 - b. Laws and regulations that facilitate trade and investment;
 - c. Open and transparent public tender systems;
 - d. Business impediments and issues of concern to the business communities of both Parties;
 - e. Intellectual property rights protection and enforcement; and
 - f. Standards.

Working Group

A Working Group, consisting of designated officials from both Parties will be created to address the above issues. Each party will select a co-chair for the Working Group.

Deliverables

The Secretary of Commerce and the Minister of Commerce and Industry will cooperate in the development and implementation of appropriate public and private sector capacity building programs related to domestic and international commerce. This may include training exchanges involving:

- a. Afghan government officials visiting their counterparts in the United States to learn about best practices in private sector related policies and regulations;
- b. U.S. experts traveling to Afghanistan to advise both government officials and private sector representatives on ways to foster economic development;

The Secretary of Commerce and the Minister of Commerce and Industry will support, as appropriate, commercial exchanges between the United States and Afghan private sectors. Such endeavors may include the following:

- a. Encouraging and facilitating participation of their respective private sectors in permanent, temporary and specialized trade fairs, such as the Afghanistan International Carpet Fair;
- b. Supporting the organization and sponsorship of trade missions, exhibits, seminars, and other events intended to enhance the Parties commercial relationship;

- c. Dissemination of trade-related data and statistics including information-sharing about events of common interest.
- d. Facilitating linkages between Afghan and U.S. businesses, especially in the targeted sectors of rugs, mining, and dried fruits and nuts.
- e. Developing resources for small- and medium-sized enterprises to promote access to capital and trade finance.

Follow Up

Following its first meeting, the Working Group shall endeavor to outline additional deliverables to be worked on in the short term and present these to the principals.

General Provisions

Obligations of each Party under this Work Plan are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and the respective laws and regulations of the United States and Afghanistan.

For the Department of Commerce
of
the United States of America:

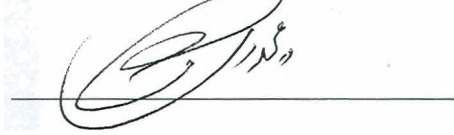
For the Ministry of Commerce and
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Carlos M. Gutierrez

Mir Muhammad Amin Farhang



Date: _____



Date: 10.07.2007