

The Informal COM Meeting

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

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Annex-VII

Excellencies,

The Prime Minister of Pakistan has recently held discussion with his Afghan counterpart. He also called on the President Karzai. He met Marshal Fahim and he called on the father of the nation and as a result of those discussions we issued a joint press statement but the focus of that was that Pakistan's government wanted to give an expression of its solidarity with its brothers in Afghanistan. Pakistan has announced US\$ 100 million project and that there has been progress with regard to transit trade arrangements.

In recent months Pakistani banks will be opening branches in Afghanistan. The air links through PIA will be opening and we hope that there will also be expenditure on schools, hospitals and printing of books. So we believe that this is very important project; this is a very valuable project and this is a project for the future, because this is how Afghanistan will develop and with the development of Afghanistan, obviously the whole region.

Afghanistan is a key country and I totally agree with my colleague from Afghanistan that the key role Afghanistan will play in the networking in the transportation links in the pipeline and other projects that have been mentioned; and one of the important ways of doing that will be through return of peace, prosperity; because prosperity of Afghanistan will reflect on the prosperity of all of us and we hope that this a project which has the support of all of us and it will make rapid progress.

Thank you Excellencies.