



The implications of conflict on achieving the SDGs: A perspective from the 2021 VNR of Afghanistan



**9 July 2021
7:30 – 9:00 AM**

The Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations and the g7+ (group of seven plus) secretariat are co-organizing a side event on “The implications of conflict on achieving the SDGs: A perspective from the 2021 VNR of Afghanistan” on the margins of the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on **9th July, 2021**. The event will be held virtually.

Background:

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is presenting its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) during the 2021 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The VNR takes stock of the status of implementation of the SDGs, outlines significant achievements, summarizes the Government’s actions and policies, and provides an overview of current and emerging challenges.

The report identifies the continued conflict as one of the most significant challenges to achieving the SDGs in Afghanistan. As described in the opening statement of the report by Dr. Karima Hamid Faryabi, Minister of Economy: “The continuation of conflict associated with high civilian and military casualties and the withdrawal of international coalition forces will increase security burden on the government which will in turn put pressure on the limited government resources which could be otherwise used for development in the country.”

The effects of war on conflict affected countries’, like Afghanistan’s, ability to achieve the SDGs are multidimensional and complex and affect all Goals and targets. Conflicts erode social and economic gains and has a direct negative impact on development. According to the 2020 Global Peace Index, the economic cost of violence in Afghanistan is estimated at 50.3 percent

of GDP. As noted by Afghanistan’s VNR, it reduces productive capacity, weakens governance, and constrains market opportunities.

The continued conflict further threatens the central promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. As concluded by the VNR, war is among the main reasons for continued violations against children and women. It is exacerbating pre-existing gender discrimination and exposing women to heightened risks of violence. It also continues to force people from their homes and land, forcing many into negative cycles of displacement, poverty, and debt.

The Government of Afghanistan is committed to overcome challenges related to conflict and achieve concrete results towards the Afghanistan – Sustainable Development Goals (A– SDGs). As outlined in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF-II, 2021-2025), the Government has decided to take an integrated approach to development that focuses on peace-building, state-building, and market-building. The approach is based on the simple premise, as established by the 2030 Agenda, that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” It aims to transform a negative feedback loop of war and poverty into positive cycles of reinforcing trends towards peace and prosperity.

The principle that the state must respond to citizen’s needs and demands, especially women and the most vulnerable, in a direct, accountable, and transparent manner to leave no one behind is at the core of the ANPDF-II. Therefore, the state-building pillar endeavors to build and strengthen trust between the duty bearers/state institutions and rights holders/the citizens of Afghanistan. The ANPDF-II further establishes peace-building as the foundational pillar on which economic growth and development are built. In so doing, the Government’s development efforts recognize that development can only be achieved through a whole of society approach that engages all segments of the population, enhances social cohesion, and addresses grievances.

Objectives:

This official side event will focus on the critical lessons learned from Afghanistan’s second Voluntary National Review on the complex relationship between peace and development in Afghanistan. It will be an opportunity to discuss how the transition in Afghanistan and other g7+ countries that are experiencing active conflicts affect the prospect of achieving the ambition set by Agenda 2030.

The event also aims to look ahead by considering Afghanistan’s development prospects following a comprehensive peace agreement and ceasefire. It will draw on the experiences and lessons learned from around the globe, particularly g7+ members, to inform discussions on how Afghanistan can accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and, simultaneously, advance peace. In so doing, the event aims to guide development partner’s on how to improve their development support and lessons learned to help Afghanistan avoid previous mistakes and learn from other countries.

Agenda [TBC]:

1. Welcoming remarks by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations
2. Opening remarks by Dr. Helder da Costa, General Secretary of the g7+ Secretariat
3. Keynote speech by Dr. Karima Hamid Faryabi, Minister of Economy, Afghanistan
4. Moderated Panel Discussion
Moderator: Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation
 - a. Mohammad Nabii Soroosh, Deputy Minister for Policy, Afghanistan
 - b. Mr. Abdallah Al Dardari, UNDP Resident Representative Afghanistan
 - c. Permanent Representative of g7+ Member [TBC]
 - d. Dr. Youssef Mahmoud, Senior Advisor at the International Peace Institute [TBC]
 - e. Mrs. Roshan Mashal, Deputy Director of Afghan Women Network
5. Open discussion
6. Closing remarks by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations