

The Sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan

“The Silk Road through Afghanistan”

3-4 September 2015, Kabul

Information Note for Participants

I. Conference Concept

2014 represented a watershed year for Afghanistan. From presidential elections to the completion of the country’s security transition and establishment of the National Unity Government, the political and security transition processes have been concluded. A successful economic transition remains the third critical pillar for ensuring that the significant gains achieved since 2001 are irreversible. Situated at the crossroads of Eurasia, Afghanistan can now access some of the world’s fastest growing markets, as well as serve as a transit hub for expanding trade between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Besides raising living standards and spreading ideas and culture, increased economic connectivity through Afghanistan builds confidence and trust across the region, defending against the spread of extremism, narcotics, poverty, and hopelessness.

Building on the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) series initiated in 2005 – *and held in Kabul, New Delhi, Islamabad, Istanbul, and Dushanbe* – RECCA-VI, will be convened on 3-4 September 2015 in Kabul.

Consultations on the above goals will occur in advance of RECCA-VI with Afghan Ministries, regional and international counterparts. The two-day Conference will comprise the following events:

- A high-level Ministerial Meeting will be held at protocol Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 4 September 2015 (See agenda for details)
- Preceding the Ministerial Meeting, 3 working group meetings will be held on 3 September 2015 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- A RECCA-VI Academic Forum, Regional Business Forum and Trade Exhibition, will be held in parallel to the working group meetings in different venues on 3 September 2015 (*with the Trade Exhibition to continue on 4 and 5 September*).

II. Organizer

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

III. Timing

Unless otherwise advised, all meetings during the RECCA VI will be held from 0900 to 1230 hours and from 1400to 1800hours. The tentative agenda for main event is attached and for other side events will be distributed in advance.

IV. Registration and Badges

Participants are requested to register with all requested details so that we can extend the best possible hospitality and services to them during their stay in Kabul. The completed registration forms (a copy is attached with contact details) must be sent to RECCA VI focal points at the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs no later than 15 May2015.

Participants are encouraged to obtain meeting badges prior to the conference events on September3. Badges will be distributed to their missions in advance through Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Protocol Office) or in the VIP lounge, Kabul International Airport. For identification and security reasons, all participants are requested to wear their meeting badges during meeting times.

V. Visa

All participants must obtain their entry visa to Afghanistan in advance of traveling, through any Afghan diplomatic or consular Missions in their respective countries or upon their destination. Visa upon arrival will be issued at Kabul International Airport for delegation of those countries where no Afghan diplomatic or consulate missions exist and/or in exceptional cases. The Afghan diplomatic and Consular Missions abroad have already been notified to facilitate visa issuance for RECCA-VI conference participants.

The Nationals of the following countries holding a valid diplomatic passport are exempted from requiring an entry visa to Afghanistan (based on a reciprocal basis):China, Indonesia, Iran, Tajikistan, and Turkey.

VI. Weather

The weather in Kabul is warm in early September, usually between 25-27 degrees Celsius.

VII. Currency

The Afghan national currency is Afghani. One US dollar is equivalent to about 57 Afghanis. Currency exchange facilities are available at hotels and at other locations in Kabul.

VIII. Trip to Kabul& Flight Reservations

Many international airlines operate regular services to and from Kabul. There are more than 15 flights from Dubai, Istanbul, New Delhi, Dushanbe and Moscow to Kabul and vice versa. Participants are advised to secure their return booking prior their departure to Kabul. If this is not possible, they should make firm return bookings immediately upon arrival in Kabul. For

delegates using chartered flights, information about plane, arrival time, and duration of stay and departure time are required no later than 15 May 2015. Charges are applicable.

IX. Hotel Accommodation

MoFA will extend local hospitality, including room and meals for the participants with the following format:

Minister + 2, Deputy Minister +1, Head of International Organization +1 during the Ministerial Conference for two nights. Accommodation will be provided in the following hotels:

Kabul Serena Hotel

Froshgah Street (center of the city)

Tel: +93 (0) 799654000

Fax: +93 (0) 799654111

Email: niamat.habib@serena.com.af

Website: www.serenahotels.com

Kabul Star Hotel

Zanbaq Square Ankara Street,

Tel: +93 (0) 20 231 3131 and

+93 (0) 20 230 4646

Email: info@kabulstarhotel.af

Website: www.kabulstarhotel.af

InterContinental Kabul

BagheBala, Suite 600,

Tel: +93 (0) 20-2562765 and

+93 (0) 20-2562767

Email: info@intercontinentalkabul.com

Website: www.intercontinentalkabul.com

Additional officials and participants planning to attend one of the RECCA-VI Forums on September 3 or other side events are requested to make their own accommodation.

Delegations requiring rooms at the Kabul Serena Hotel, InterContinental Kabul and Kabul Star Hotel need to confirm their bookings no later than 30 July 2015. Delegations wishing to stay in private accommodations, including at the embassy residents, are requested to inform the Conference Secretariat.

Note: All Government and International Agency delegations are strongly encouraged to consider identifying and sponsoring relevant non-governmental participants from their respective country at the RECCA-VI Academic Forum, Regional Business Forum and Trade Exhibition, all scheduled for September 3.

X. Transportation

The conference will provide transport to facilitate the movement of all participants from the Hamid Karzai International Airport to the Kabul Serena Hotel, InterContinental Kabul, and Kabul Star Hotel and vice versa (free of charge). Transport will also be provided to the participants from the aforementioned hotels to and from the Ministerial meeting on September 4 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

XI. Business Center

A business center will be available for participants to the Working Group Meetings and Ministerial Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with free Wi-Fi connection.

XII. Conference Documents and Translation

All conference documents will be available in the conference room and also on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: www.mfa.gov.af. The Conference language will be in English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic and Russian Languages.

XIII. Security

There will be a security check for all participants before entering the Conference Hall. Although a cloakroom will be available near the meeting venue, delegations are kindly asked to not bring in any large pieces of luggage.

XIV. Bilateral Meetings

Heads of Delegation participating at the RECCA-VI requesting bilateral meetings with Afghan leaders are requested to contact MoFA protocol department.

XIIV. Conference Secretariat

1. RECCA-VI Working Group and Ministerial Meetings (September 3-4, 2015):

- Mr. Aziz Noorzad
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Telephone: +93 70 010 4211
Mobile: +93 700104211
Emails: protocolmfa@gmail.com, aziznoorzad@gmail.com
- Mr. Mostainbillah Balagh
Deputy Director General for Economic Cooperation, MoFA
Telephone: +93 20 210 4350
Mobile: +93 79 2425931
Emails: recca@mfa.gov.af, mbalagh@hotmail.com
Website: www.mfa.gov.af

2. RECCA Academic Forum (September3, 2015):

- Mr. Sayed Mahdi Munadi
Center for Strategic Studies, MoFA
Telephone: +93 20 210 0320
Mobile: +93 79 793 6936
Emails: c.s.s@mfa.gov.af, mahdi.munadi@gmail.com
Website: www.css.gov.af

3. RECCABusiness Forum& Trade Exhibition(September3, 2015):

- Mr. Mohammad QasemNasiri
International Affairs Director, Afghanistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (ACCI)
Telephone: +9375 2025854
Mobile: + 93 79 630 0554
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Website: www.acci.org.af

- Mr. Hashem Rasouli
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