

**Joint Declaration**  
**Of**  
**High Peace Council and Civil Society Organizations**

**September 26, 2013**

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In the last more than twelve years, in spite of the numerous challenges, Afghanistan has witnessed tremendous developments in different economic, social, cultural and political areas. During this time, in addition to reconstruction of the country and strengthening of the political system, and state institution to deliver better social services; democratic and public institutions, which are integral part of the political dispensation of the country has also grown and played an effective role in different areas of public life. It is worth mentioning that after decades of isolation, during the last decade Afghanistan had the opportunity of having strong support of the international community, for which the people of Afghanistan obliges the role of international community in reconstruction and development of their country.

Alongside other institutions, due share of the civil society in supporting democratic reforms, providing an opportunity for building human resources capacity, social development and access to the vulnerable classes of the society and their role as a voice of the silent majority has to be highly appreciated. Likewise the Afghan Civil Society has been able to play its obligations in the important national processes, alongside people and the state of the Islamic Republic.

Presently, Afghanistan has three important and vital national processes ahead, which includes the Security Transition from the international troops to Afghan National Security Forces, Peace and National Reconciliation Process, and the Presidential and Provincial Councils' Elections. We believe that without cooperation and direct participation of Civil Society and other stakeholders', success of these processes will lack effectiveness.

With understanding of the fact that peace is a vital need and demand of every citizen of the nation, we believe that having an objective-oriented, pervasive, and transparent strategy is the only way out to fulfill that need of Afghans. Given the constructive role and experience of the Afghan Civil Society in promotion of a culture of peace in the country, after a series of meetings and interactions, the leadership of the High Peace Council, and a number of Civil Society Institutions have reached an agreement to work and endeavor jointly in order to promote and support the peace process. Likewise, it has been agreed that the Civil Society organizations will closely cooperate and coordinate with the HPC and other social and government institutions in different areas, specifically in conducting of researches, conflict assessments and identification, public awareness

and training of communities, building capacities in technical and vocational skills, as well as monitoring and assessment of different stages of this process. It has to be mentioned that even now a number of civil society organizations are practically involved in peace endeavors through effective community-based peace building and are paying efforts for promotion of peace and national unity.

This document (Cooperation Framework between the Civil Society and the HPC), that has been drafted and endorsed in consultation with the HPC and a number of Civil Society Organizations, stipulates roles of the parties in four main areas:

1. Continuous interactions and consultation with HPC and citizens with the aim of building trust vis-à-vis peace process.
2. Playing role of a bridge between the HPC and citizens to address complains and concerns of both sides.
3. Imparting peace education and promoting a culture of peace
4. Conducting researches, monitoring, and assessments and offering recommendations based on research findings and following up implementation of those recommendations.

We urge all parties of the conflict, to restrain from fighting, acts of violence and terrorism based on principles of Islam and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan and to pursue the path of negotiations and talks. Continuation of war and bloodshed has no sharia and legal base, and increases miseries and pains of the people as well as undermines development of the country. Therefore it is a must that peaceful, just and reasonable ways of achieving peace are explored so that Afghans could resolve their problems with due consideration to their national interests and without interference of the outsiders.

Civil Society and the High Peace Council believe that any national peace and reconciliation process shall help and guarantee rights of all the citizens, specially women, and achievements of the last one decade, including values enshrined in the Constitution as securing a sustainable peace is not possible without respecting of these vital principles. In this regard convergence of Civil Society Institutions and the High Peace Council can ensure protection of national interests and rights of the citizens.

This document is a first sign of cooperation between the High Peace Council and the Civil Society and its endorsement will entail effective use of available capacities and access to broader civil society institution and different segments of the society.

This document is effective as of September 21, which coincides with the Peace and National Unity Week and the implementation plan will soon be drafted and enforces.

High Peace Council

Civil Society Organizations