



Central Zone Civil Society Consultative Gathering

Statement

Bamyan. Afghanistan

16th June 2022

Over the last months, the first civil society consultative gathering for the activists of the central zone was successfully conducted in Bamyan province.

The gathering brought together over 120 civil society representatives, including activists, cultural figures, and people from all walks of life from the Bamyan and Daikondi provinces.

The consultation was facilitated by the Voice of Afghan people (VAP) and aimed to share the participants' current challenges, concerns, and views with the relevant authorities.

On behalf of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Mawlavi Abdullah Sarhadi, Bamyan governor, and Mawlavi Saif Rahman Mohammadi, director of culture and information, joined the summit. They assured the participants that their concerns and demands would be considered to improve the country's current situation.

The participants held discussions in working groups based on education, economic, and civil society's challenges, and opportunities. The main conclusions of these discussions are as follows:

1. Participants believed that the economic crisis imposed by international sanctions led to poverty and economic disorder, negatively affecting people's lives. In addition, the lack of local investments and reduced cash business increased poverty at the grassroots and local levels. Moreover, participants expressed their gratitude for the international aid and called on the international community and the IEA to find a fundamental and sustainable way to eradicate poverty in Afghanistan.
2. More people have recently migrated due to economic hardship, which will lead to enormous social and economic gaps in the future. Additionally, the Afghan brain drain and losing human capital are worsening the current situation in the country. Therefore, participants called on the Islamic

Emirate of Afghanistan and the international community to seek appropriate and sustainable solutions.

3. The economic crisis also affects the scientific and academic communities, and the participants called on the relevant authorities and the international community to pay serious attention.
4. The participants called for establishing a mechanism for coordinating civil society efforts in the current context, to work on approaches and procedures for interaction with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) and the international community.
5. The participants called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to pay serious attention to reopening girls' schools per Islamic practices and principles and added that further delay would cause more pain and damage to society.
6. The participants requested the Islamic Emirate to respect the accepted definition of civil society, which could regulate civil society activities and operations and play its bridging role between the public and the authorities.
7. The participants called for the role and participation of women in the government and national decision-making processes based on Islamic teachings and practices. In addition, they requested the IEA support women in business, respect their rights as citizens, provide access to modern and religious education, and systematically address women's issues.

Finally, the participants asked the IEA to ensure broad interaction with the various spectrums of civil society and to work together to create transparency and confidence-building between citizens and officials. The participants also welcomed any other priorities the Islamic Emirate wanted to discuss in the continuation of the talks.

The one-day regional gathering will be followed up with various other summits at the regional and provincial levels.