

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT
(Directorate General of Media)

PRESS RELEASE

TWO-DAY SEMINAR ON PAK-AFGHAN TRADE & INVESTMENT FORUM
CONCLUDES, FINALIZES RECOMMENDATIONS

PEACEFUL NEIGHBOURHOOD- A VITAL COMPONENT OF PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN
POLICY: SANJRANI

TRADE RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN TO AUGUR WELL FOR REGIONAL
GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT: SPEAKER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has said that regional development and economic prosperity is dependent on connectivity, enhanced trade linkages and better investment opportunities. Chairman Senate said this while addressing the closing session of the two-day seminar "Pakistan Afghanistan Trade & Investment Forum" here in Islamabad on Tuesday.

He said that both Pakistan and Afghanistan share strong geographic, cultural and religious ties and building close cooperative relations with Afghanistan is a high priority of Pakistan's foreign policy and a vital component of our vision of a "peaceful neighbourhood."

"It is now time to turn our bilateral and economic linkages into a strategic partnership for betterment and prosperity our people and the region as well" Sadiq Sanjrani remarked while addressing participants. HE emphasized the need to raise current trade volume between the two countries to match immense economic cooperation potential. CPEC offers another golden opportunity to join hands for the wellbeing of our peoples, especially youth, he added.

Pakistan, Chairman Senate said, is very keen to strengthen people-to-people contacts, and trade and economic ties with Afghanistan. HE also mentioned that Pakistan reopened a key border crossing to resume exports from Afghanistan to India under the Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement. He informed that Pakistan has recently introduced a new visa policy to facilitate business and people-to-people contacts between the two countries. This, he said, shows our support for a thriving Afghanistan.

He said that People of both the countries have suffered immensely during the past few decades which also affected the economic development prospects. He said that there is need to move forward as our youth are calling for change now and it is our duty to create a safe place for them to realize their own potential. He expressed the hope that the seminar will provide the much needed blueprint for Pak-Afghan cooperative development future.

He commended Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser for personally looking into the matter of Afghan Containers that got stuck. He appreciated the organizers, especially the National Assembly led by the Speaker, for excellent arrangements and choosing most relevant topics for discussion. "I firmly believe that the outcomes of this forum will the pave the way towards much

needed economic growth and prosperity in the region” Sanjrani said while ending his speech with best wishes to the participants.

Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser also addressed concluding session of the seminar and said that capitalizing the potential of trade and investment between Pakistan and Afghanistan would bring regional prosperity and economic stability. He remarked that parliament to parliament contact would ease the hurdles of traders and investors on both side of the border. “Both countries are facing the scourge of extremism, terrorism and economic deprivations and only collaborative efforts by both partners would lessen the intensity of socio-economic issues faced by both countries”, he added.

Asad Qaiser Speaker also remarked that this forum was to focus on bringing recommendations and solutions to the impediments faced by traders on both side of the border. He mentioned that the more time was allocated for thematic sessions to grill the issues in depth and proposing the viable solutions to these issue. He lauded the efforts made by Afghan delegation and members of trade and commerce of afghan community who travelled so far and gracious their suggestions to remove the impediments on trader between both countries. He expressed his optimism that this would be start of the journey of cooperation and coordination between both neighborly countries. He appreciated the passionate participation of Afghan Parliament Delegation which visited under the leadership of Speaker Wolesi Jirga Mir. Rehman Rahmani. He appreciated efforts of USAID for the organization of this successful seminar.

Chairman Senate and Speaker National Assembly strongly condemned terrorist attack on Madrassa in Peshawar today and resolved that such terrorist activities would not shake friendship between both countries." Advisor for Commerce Abdul Razaq Dawood said that Preferential treaty agreement would be discussed and he would visit Afghanistan next month in this regard. He said that Pakistan also considers trade with Afghanistan as an important component. He said that the trade volume enhancement is our objective and concrete steps would be taken to facilitate trade.