

At a Glance

Concordis International worked with Afghan and international partners to run a 3-day conference in Kabul in April 2010, aiming to develop civil society's constructive role in a comprehensive Afghan peace process.



'A Common Voice for Peace and Reconciliation' Kabul Conference, April 2010

As a partner in the **Afghanistan: Pathways to Peace** project, Concordis International played a supporting role in preparing and implementing a 3-day conference in April 2010 for Afghan civil society, which examined the nature of a comprehensive peace process for Afghanistan and developed concepts for the role of civil society in such a process.

Pathways to Peace is a partnership between Afghan and international organizations, led by Kabul University and Peacebuild: The Canadian Peacebuilding Network, and intended to develop and foster political solutions to the multi-faceted conflict in Afghanistan through broad and inclusive reconciliation processes. The initial phase is funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs

and International Trade, CARE Canada and Peacebuild.

The April conference both examined what was meant by a comprehensive peace process and developed civil society values and potential activities that would contribute to such a process (see inset).

Concordis International's Chief Executive spoke on the components and elements of a comprehensive peace process, pointing out that such a process did not just mean 'official' negotiations with insurgents but needed to be broader, deeper and longer-lasting. A broader process could make negotiations more likely to succeed and any settlement more sustainable. Most speakers were members of Afghan civil society, seen in its broadest sense to include both 'modern' and traditional, urban and rural entities, structures and networks. They reported on research, carried out under the Pathways project, into Afghan attitudes and grievances, and spoke *inter alia* on the roles of jirgas, Afghan attitudes to international military presence and preconditions for a peace process. International visitors from Canada, the USA and Ireland added value through sharing their own insights and experiences.



Main Conclusions

Five core values on which peace should be built in Afghanistan

- Accountability and transparency
- Inclusivity: All sectors of society to be involved (men, women, young, old, all ethnic and major tribal groups)
- Transitional justice and the rejection of impunity
- Trust-building among communities
- Nation-building and national unity

Five central activities as the basis of further action

- Establish a mechanism to coordinate peacebuilding initiatives and activities. Coordination on three levels: within civil society; between civil society and government; between civil society and the international community
- Monitoring of peacebuilding processes
- Training and preparation of future leaders
- Public outreach and awareness raising programmes (e.g. through media)
- Further research on issues central to peacebuilding



Following the

conference, participants held a round table discussion with senior media representatives on the potential role of the media in a peace process and briefed international diplomats on the Afghan views that had emerged from the conference.

The conference was a significant step on the way to a broad Afghan peace process, but there are many hurdles ahead. Resources permitting, Concordis will continue to work with Afghan, Canadian and other partners on the project, making a contribution that matches our particular skills and capacities.

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