

## **Joint Statement issued by India and Pakistan during the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan**

September 08, 2012

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan H.E. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar and the Minister of External Affairs of India H.E. Mr. S.M. Krishna met in Islamabad on September 8, 2012, for a meeting to review progress in the Dialogue process.

2. The Ministerial level talks were preceded by a meeting between the Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India on September 7, 2012.

3. The talks were held in a cordial, candid and constructive atmosphere.

4. The Ministers reviewed the status of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction on the holding of meetings on the issues of Counter-Terrorism (including progress on Mumbai trial) and Narcotics Control; Humanitarian issues; Commercial & Economic cooperation; Wullar Barrage / Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek; Siachen; Peace & Security including CBMs; Jammu & Kashmir; and promotion of Friendly Exchanges.

5. The Ministers noted that the dialogue process is guided by the commitment of leadership of the two countries, expressed at the highest level, to find peaceful and mutually acceptable solutions to all outstanding issues and to build a relationship of trust and all round cooperation between Pakistan and India.

6. The Ministers expressed satisfaction at the increase in high level bilateral exchanges between the two countries since their last meeting in New Delhi in July 2011, namely, leadership level meetings between President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at New Delhi and Tehran in April and August 2012, the first ever bilateral visit of the Speaker of Lok Sabha to Pakistan at the invitation of the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, visit of the Commerce Minister of Pakistan to India, after 35 years, in September 2011, another visit by the Commerce Minister of Pakistan to India in April 2012, and the first ever bilateral visit of the Commerce and Industry Minister of India to Pakistan in February 2012. The Ministers underlined the importance of continued high level exchange between the two countries.

7. The Ministers held substantive discussions on the whole range of issues within the framework of the Dialogue process and expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved since their last review meeting in July 2011.

8. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of carrying forward the dialogue process with a view to resolving peacefully all outstanding issues through constructive and result oriented engagement, and to establish friendly, cooperative and good neighborly relations between Pakistan and India.

9. The Ministers agreed that terrorism poses a continuing threat to peace and security. They reaffirmed the strong commitment of the two countries to fight terrorism in an effective and comprehensive manner so as to eliminate the scourge in all its forms and manifestations.

10. The Ministers noted the commitment given by Pakistan during the Interior/ Home Secretary talks in May 2012 to bring all the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks to justice expeditiously in accordance with due process of law.

11. The Ministers noted that during the Interior/ Home Secretary talks in May 2012 Indian side had conveyed that the investigation in the Samjhauta Express blast case is still ongoing and updated information will be shared with the Pakistan authorities, through diplomatic channels when the investigation is completed.

12. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on "Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs/ Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals and related matters" between the Anti Narcotics Force of Pakistan and Narcotics Control Bureau of India in

September 2011 and expressed the hope that the MoU will help enhance mutual cooperation between Pakistan and India through effective and sustained steps to control the growing menace of drug trafficking.

13. The Ministers welcomed the release of prisoners and fishermen, including those suffering from ailments, in the past year or so. They agreed that the Agreement on Consular Access should be implemented in letter and spirit including immediate notification of arrests by either side, consular access to all persons within three months of arrests, release of prisoners within one month of completion of sentence and confirmation of their national status. The Ministers also welcomed the continued work of the Judicial Committee and agreed with the need to implement its recommendations on various aspects of release and repatriation of prisoners and fishermen of each country by the other and adoption of the humane approach in dealing with cases of fishermen and prisoners, especially women, elderly, juvenile, and those terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical/ mental disability.

14. The Ministers noted that talks were held between the Director General of the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and the Director General of the Indian Coast Guard in New Delhi in July 2012 and agreed to the importance of continuing their meetings. They further directed that the issues relating to fishermen as contained in para-10 of the Joint Statement issued after the Interior/Home Secretaries talks between Pakistan and India in March 2011 would be further examined by the relevant authorities of the two countries.

15. The Ministers welcomed the decision during the last meeting of the Home/ Interior Secretaries of the two countries in May 2012 to initiate discussions in order to strengthen mutual cooperation in criminal matters.

16. The Ministers attached importance to promoting Peace and Security, including Confidence Building Measures, between the two countries and agreed to convene separate meetings of the Expert Groups on Nuclear and Conventional CBMs, in New Delhi in the second half of December 2012.

17. The Ministers held discussions on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to the need for continued discussions, in a purposeful and forward looking manner, with a view to finding a peaceful solution by narrowing divergences and building convergences.

18. The Ministers reviewed the existing Cross-LoC CBMs and acknowledged that the ceasefire was holding since 2003. They also reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken regarding travel and trade across the Line of Control (LoC) in their last meeting in July 2011. They expressed satisfaction at the increasing number of people of Jammu and Kashmir who are able to avail of the facility to travel across LoC, and also at the growing Cross-LoC trade benefitting them on both sides of the LoC. They also welcomed the enhancement of the number of days for conducting trade across LoC from two to four per week, as had been agreed by them. Taking note of the recommendations made by the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Cross-LoC CBMs in its meeting in Islamabad on July 19, 2012, the Ministers decided the following: -

Cross-LoC Travel:

- (i) Cross-LoC travel would be expanded on both sides of LoC to include visits for tourism and religious pilgrimage.
- (ii) Tourist and Pilgrimage sites will be designated on both sides of the LoC and information will be available with the designated authorities.
- (iii) Such visits will be conducted by designated Tour Operators in groups not exceeding 15 persons.
- (iv) Permits for such visits will be single entry, non-extendable and valid for up to 15 days.
- (v) Travel for tourism or pilgrimage will be arranged during summer season i.e. April to October.
- (vi) Crossing for such visits will initially be from Chakothi-Uri and Rawalakot-Poonch Crossing points.
- (vii) Both sides will facilitate speedy clearance of applications for travel across LoC. The process time should not be more than 45 days.
- (viii) Both sides will extend necessary assistance to valid entry permit holders to cross the LoC in emergency situation on crossing as well as non-crossing days. This will be facilitated by designated authorities.

Cross-LoC Trade:

- (i) List of 21 products of permissible items for Cross-LoC trade will be respected by both sides.
- (ii) Regular meetings between the traders on monthly basis on both sides will be facilitated.
- (iii) The designated authorities will resolve operational issues concerning Cross-LoC trade through regular meetings.
- (iv) Improvement of roads and bridges for Cross-LoC trade will be facilitated.
- (v) Transportation links on operational crossing points will be upgraded.
- (vi) Both sides agreed to facilitate the exchange of business delegations.

19. It was agreed that the JWG on Cross-LoC CBMs will meet on a bi-annual basis to review existing arrangements and suggest additional CBMs and measures for Cross-LoC travel and trade.

20. Both sides agreed to the need for promoting friendly exchanges between the two countries. They also discussed measures for promoting cooperation in various fields including facilitating visits to religious shrines, media exchanges, holding of sports tournaments and cessation of hostile propaganda against each other.

21. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the new Visa Agreement which liberalises bilateral visa regime and introduces a number of measures aimed at easing travel of business persons, tourists, pilgrims, elderly and children, thereby facilitating contacts between peoples of the two countries, who should remain at the heart of the relationship between Pakistan and India.

22. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of culture between the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

23. The two sides exchanged views on Siachen, Sir Creek and Wullar Barrage/ Tulbul Navigation Project, agreed that there is the need to effectively address these issues by finding mutually acceptable solutions and reiterated their commitment to do so. They also reaffirmed the importance of abiding by the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty.

24. The Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress registered towards normalizing bilateral trade and commercial relations. The Ministers firmly reiterated that both sides will scrupulously adhere to the roadmap drawn up by the two Commerce Ministries for full normalization of trade relations. They agreed that a strong and enhanced economic partnership is in the interest of peoples of both countries.

25. The Ministers welcomed reactivation of the Pakistan-India Joint Commission, in accordance with their decision taken last year. They Co-Chaired the Plenary of the Joint Commission, which met for the first time after 2007. They expressed satisfaction at the meetings of all eight Technical Level Working Groups and noted that these Groups have made a number of suggestions for exploring mutually beneficial cooperation in areas of agriculture, education, environment, health, information and broadcasting, information technology and telecommunication, science and technology and tourism. They took note of and approved the Report by the Foreign Secretaries, which is annexed.

26. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives of SAARC and agreed to make joint efforts to promote cooperation for regional development in the SAARC framework.

27. The Ministers agreed to the launch of the next round of Secretary level dialogue on all eight segments, as contained in para-4 above. Schedule for these meetings will be worked out through diplomatic channels. They further agreed that all these meetings will be held prior to their next review meeting in New Delhi in 2013.

28. The External Affairs Minister of India called on the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

#### Areas Identified for Cooperation by Technical Level Working Groups of the Pakistan-India Joint Commission

• The Pakistan-India Joint Commission met in Islamabad on 6th September 2012 in pursuance of the decision taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Minister of External Affairs of India during their last meeting in New Delhi on 27 July 2011. The reactivation of the Joint Commission was welcomed by both sides. The following eight Technical Level Working Groups (TLWG) discussed and identified avenues

of mutually beneficial cooperation in the respective fields:

- ♣ Agriculture
- ♣ Education
- ♣ Environment
- ♣ Health
- ♣ Information
- ♣ IT & Telecom
- ♣ Science and Technology
- ♣ Tourism

• The working group on Agriculture discussed avenues of cooperation and identified certain areas for collaboration including exchange of experts and training of scientists in the areas of crop improvement through the use of biotechnology, cooperation in seed sector, quarantine related matters, livestock and dairy development sector, high efficiency irrigation system and rain water harvesting.

• The working group on Education explored avenues for furthering cooperation in the fields of school and higher education, non-formal education and adult literacy. It also explored furthering cooperation through institutional linkages between Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and University Grants Commission of India, linkages between National Vocational and Technical Training Commission of Pakistan and All India Council for Technical Education of India and exchange of experiences between National Book Foundation of Pakistan, National Book Trust and National Council of Educational Research and Training of India.

• The working group on Environment discussed various issues relating to environment and agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of climate change, renewable energy, environmental protection, energy conservation and Clean Development Mechanism, Bio diversity and sustainable forest conservation, solid waste management. It agreed to share experiences and best practices including establishing institutional linkages for knowledge sharing and capacity building.

• The working group on Health agreed to enhance cooperation in polio eradication and increasing immunization coverage, cooperation in women and child health, sharing experience for retaining human resources in rural area exchange of information on regulatory regime and institutional collaboration between Drug Regulatory Agency of Pakistan and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization of India. They also agreed to enhance cooperation in Quality Assurance and Drug Testing laboratories in pharmaceuticals and biological.

• The working group on Information discussed issues concerning Information and Broadcasting. In this context, exchange of journalists and information professionals, organizing film festivals in each other's countries, holding of seminars/workshops, between Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and suitable Pakistani Institute; and between Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and Academies of Pakistan Television Corporation and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation; news exchange between official news agencies and exchange of TV and Radio programmes were identified for future collaboration. Both sides agreed that media can play a pivotal role in building and enabling environment between the two countries.

• The Working group on IT & Telecom discussed avenues of cooperation. Pakistan invited Indian companies to participate in ICT events in Pakistan. India offered to organize a customized e-governance workshop in India for Pakistan. They also discussed possibilities of collaboration in International Domain Name (IDN), sharing best practices on e-governance. Open Source Technologies and IT Enabled Services. The Group emphasized improved visa facilitation for IT & Telecom professionals. India offered to forward a proposal for establishing telemedicine linkages between the two countries.

• The working group on Science and Technology discussed National Science, Technology Innovation System in Pakistan and India. They agreed to work on common areas of interest by holding joint workshops/seminars and short training programmes. They identified areas of medicinal plants and herbal medicines (in Pakistan), renewable energy (in India ) and Standards for such collaboration. Both sides also agreed to participate in each other's science popularization programs / activities.

- The working group on Tourism held discussion on tourism industry and potential in both countries. They explored and identified areas for cooperation particularly in information sharing, Research and Development, human resource development in the field of tourism, Destination management, marketing and promotion, Meetings Incentives Conference and Exhibition (MICE) tourism, travel and hospitality industry.

**Islamabad**

**September 8, 2012**