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جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان



**Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**  
**Ministry of Mines**  
**Office of the Minister**

**RESPONSE TO THE JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY LETTER ON THE EXTRACTIVE  
INDUSTRY IN AFGHANISTAN FROM MINISTRY OF MINES OF THE ISLAMIC  
REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

Dear Colleagues,

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Thank you for your letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012 proposing four core objectives for good governance in Afghanistan's Extractives Sector. The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Ministry of Mines are well aware of the importance of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Afghanistan and share your commitment towards accountability, transparency, good governance and protection of the environment. We are very keen to have a constructive engagement with both national and international CSOs operating in Afghanistan. It is very important that the CSOs in Afghanistan act collectively with proper representation of all the agencies working in Afghanistan.

The Ministry has put tremendous efforts into a sound policy, legislative and regulatory framework which has been developed in consultations with civil society, community organisations and other stakeholders. This includes environmental protection, social safeguards and encouraging a fair and ethical business environment. We are serious about implementing this and refining it when necessary as demonstrated by the involvement of the International Advisory Panel (IAP), the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), world renowned legal and financial advisory firms, Parliament and the Media.

We are the very first Ministry, which has established platforms such as the Quarterly Consultation Forums with the Civil Society Organizations, Donors, Media & Press and the Private Sector in Afghanistan, and we consult with them on the major policies, regulations and upcoming tenders and contracts of the Ministry of Mines of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Civil Society is also strongly represented at the Multi Stakeholder Group (MSG) of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Board and we are working closely with them on that front. We also work during our community consultation forums around major mines with the local civil society organizations.

Despite our efforts to structure and institutionalize our engagement with the CSOs in Afghanistan we are still waiting for an efficient partnership from them and encourage them to participate actively in our quarterly consultations forums, MSGs and other platforms. Lack of coordination amongst the CSO community and absence of fulsome representation by few credible CSO has always been a major source of concern for the Ministry of Mines (MoM).

We are committed to the Whole of Government Mutual Accountability Framework being presented in the Tokyo Conference in line with international best practice.

In view of the declining foreign aid and withdrawal of international security forces from Afghanistan - in our opinion we must act now as there is a huge opportunity cost for the current and future generations of Afghans if we miss our projected fiscal targets. We need to ensure that the improvements for the lives of our people can be supported by investment in mining, infrastructure and related industries.

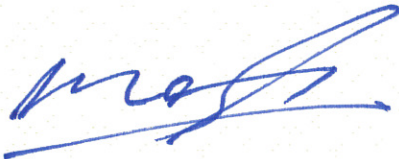
We are building up the skill levels of our staff with the support of internationally renowned firms with the backing of World Bank, USAID, DFID, and others, through learning by doing. Besides – the Ministry of Mines is sending considerable number of its staff to short-term and long-term scholarships and fellowships abroad in order to build a sustainable capacity inside the MoM.

My Ministry is ensuring that the tenders and contracts are processed in the most transparent, accountable and timely manner, so that the Afghan people will benefit, but that is not the sole focus of our Ministry and our Government, we are determined to take a holistic approach. We want to ensure we can overcome the fiscal gap, so that income is generated by mining, oil and gas and related sectors, jobs are created and opportunities for communities are increased. We also proactively publish all the tender and bid documents along with contracts (i.e. except commercially sensitive areas in line with international best practices) in the major national newspapers.

We appreciate the important work CSOs have done to help our people during years of suffering and hardship and the guidance to help establish sustainable Afghan Institutions. We look forward to co-operating in the future with CSOs and would request that we work together so that our economy can grow in a managed and sustainable manner. We do not believe there is a need for parallel structures dependent on foreign aid, which is not a sustainable way for CSOs to operate.

We encourage our CSO colleagues to take an active part in our various CSO consultation forums with true and holistic representation of the entire CSO community in Afghanistan so that we can work together in developing the Extractive Industries sector of Afghanistan in the most efficient and transparent manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wahidullah Shahrani', with a horizontal line underneath.

Wahidullah Shahrani  
Minister of Mines