



PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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PAJCCI's role as a joint body for voicing concerns of private stakeholders across the border is highly commendable: Umer Daudzai, Special Envoy for Pakistan

Subsequent to critical visit of honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan to Afghanistan to deliberate upon finalization of shared vision document with his counterpart focusing intensively on strengthening bilateral state to state relations, long-term peace in Afghanistan, enforcing against terrorism for ensuring overall security regime and regional connectivity in terms of consolidating bilateral trade, transit & investment regime, a hi-level delegation of private stakeholders under leadership of PAJCCI Chairman Zubair Motiwala called upon H.E. Umer Daudzai, Special Envoy for Pakistan to President of Afghanistan to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Honorable Daudzai shed light on the significance of consolidation of shared vision during the recent Pakistan Premier visit and established that chemistry between the two leaders was superlative as compared to the past that also resulted in immediate order of release of Pakistani prisoners detained in Afghanistan as a sign of positive gesture. He lauded the role of Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PAJCCI) as the joint body for voicing concerns of private stakeholders effectively across the border and iterated that all future economic interactions must have the optimum engagement of PAJCCI for attaining constructive results and long-term solutions to the economic hindrances.

Motiwala welcomed the new visa regime announced for Afghanistan by Pakistan after the visit of H.E. Abdullah Abdullah and hoped for the reciprocity. He staunchly believed that the results of these meetings will surely bring the positive outlook and strategic framework will be developed on an urgent basis to help stakeholders recover from the resulting devastating effects. He mentioned that Afghanistan is the only country with which Pakistan enjoys trade surplus and this trust deficit will critically affect economy of Pakistan more than Afghanistan, hence these issues must be sorted out on priority basis as Pakistan's efforts in reaping potential benefits in Central Asia can only be substantiated by prioritizing resolution of Af-Pak trade and transit issues. He also mentioned that the proposed draft on both APTTA and PTA was developed by PAJCCI across the border and have been submitted across the border to relevant ministries and presented the same to the Special Envoy. Additionally, he also tabled issues faced

by Pakistani businesses across the border specially in exporting to Central Asian countries via Afghanistan that also needs immediate resolution. He specifically sought the support of the Afghan Government in facilitating Pakistan to import cotton from Uzbekistan, keeping in view shortage of raw material in Pakistan at the moment, and requested that it should be put under “free list of customs” as the said material has no use in Afghanistan and will not have any repercussions thereof. Further he acknowledged that Pakistan should provide as much leverage to Afghanistan as possible under new PTA regime but as an interchange Afghanistan should at least give preferential treatment to Pakistan in contrast to other regional players and conducive policies may be devised for Pakistani investors to penetrate the market for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Daudzai assured that new visa regime for Pakistan is underway and will soon be announced and envisioned that with engagement of PAJCCI the newly signed APTTA and PTA will bring colossal results for the business communities of both the countries.

During the visit, PAJCCI also organized its fourth focus group discussion whereby private businesses from Pakistan deliberated with public officials in Afghanistan from Ministry of Commerce, Harakat, Customs, Transport and leadership of apex and other regional chambers. The members unanimously reiterated the significance of national sanctity and security and supported all measures that respective Governments may take to ensure the same. However, the same may not be continued at the beset of hurting the economic and social ties across the border resulting in massive monetary losses and trust deficit. Zubair Motiwala put forth issues faced by Pakistani businesses specifically pertinent to stuck containers at Afghan side of Torkham due to infrastructural issues, delayed operationalization of newly added border crossings at Afghan side, absence of quality assurance and control mechanisms whilst importing perishable goods from Afghanistan, undue delays and illicit charges on Pakistani trucks carrying exports intended for CAS, difficulties in importing cotton from Uzbekistan, 110% guarantee of custom duties charged on Pakistani exports to CAS were major highlights.

Khan Jan Alokozai, Co-Chairman PAJCCI, acknowledged role played by Zubair Motiwala on behalf of business community of Afghanistan and mentioned submission of 21 point items to Ministry of Commerce Pakistan for immediate resolution. He also suggested to constitute a 6 member committee, comprising 3 members from each chapter of PAJCCI, to deal with the respective Governments on pertinent matters for prompt resolution. This committee would act as economic and confidence building catalyst to ensure further enhancement of bilateral trade, rejuvenate regional linkages, promote joint investments.

Chairman PAJCCI iterated that both Pakistan and Afghanistan have all the potential resources to attain economic sustainability, however until the jointly supportive policies are ensured, businesses from both the countries will be at the loss and other players will utilize the untapped opportunities. He urged that apart from bilateral trade and transit, the lucrative investment regime may be announced to add value to the potentials of both the countries.

The delegation also met H.E. Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Ambassador Pakistan in Afghanistan, Women Chamber in Afghanistan, leadership of the newly formed Federation of Commerce in Afghanistan and also launched its business portal to the businesses of Afghanistan (www.businessportal.pajcci.com) as a digital platform for mutual connectivity and engagement.

