

### (1) Pakistan Opposes...

and offer them incentives that can persuade them to move away from using violence as tool for pursuing political goals," Sartaj Aziz said. "It is, therefore, important that pre-conditions are not attached to the start of the negotiation process. This in our view will be counterproductive," the Pakistani adviser said. The participants would share ideas to end the deadlock in the Pakistan-brokered talks between Kabul and the Taliban.

Aziz defended political solution to the problem and that reconciliation through a politically negotiated settlement is an arduous and complex task. He said proper sequencing of actions and measures in the process would be significant in paving the way for direct talks with Taliban groups.

"Threat of the use of military action against irreconcilables cannot precede the offer of talks to all the groups and their response to such offers. Distinction between reconcilable and irreconcilables and how to deal with the irreconcilables can follow once the avenues for bringing them to the talks have been exhausted."

He argued that certain Confidence Building Measures can play a key role in encouraging Taliban groups to join the negotiation process, suggesting a "realistic and flexible roadmap for charting the course of action to broadly define steps and phases, but avoid unrealistic targets and deadlines."

The Taliban have not officially commented on the four-nation talks, however, section of the media quoted named Taliban leaders as saying that they would not hold talks with the Afghan government.

The Taliban leaders said they want talks with the U.S. first to talk about an end to the invasion, removal of restrictions from their top leaders and release of Taliban detainees under the U.S. custody.

Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, is representing a five-member delegation in the first meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Committee. Chinese special envoy for Afghanistan, Deng Xijun, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Olsan and Pakistan Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry are leading their delegations. (Xinhua)

### (2) China Willing...

envoy on Afghan affairs Deng Xijun. China backs the "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" reconciliation process and is willing to continue playing a constructive role to this end, he said. (Xinhua)

### (3) Afghan Taliban...

recently expelled from the movement for rejecting the leadership of Mullah Akhtar Mansoor and supporting the negotiations, says the newspaper.

According to the paper, both leaders attended a meeting with Afghan officials held in the northwestern Chinese city of Urumqi in February last year.

The Afghan government considers the quadripartite process a "window of opportunity" to reduce violence in the country and stop the Taliban from launching their usual spring offensive, which begins in late March or early April.

However, a group leader refused that possibility to The Express Tribune, by stating they intend to go ahead with their military operations. (Prensa Latina)

### (4) Global Action ...

Foundation in an interview soon after leaving office.

Last March, at a conference in Sendai, Japan, governments adopted a new global framework to ramp up efforts to deal with disasters, setting seven targets to measure progress.

They include "substantially" reducing the numbers of people killed and affected by disasters, as well as damage to infrastructure and to services like health and education, and decreasing economic losses - all by 2030.

The preceding international agenda for tackling disasters was agreed in 2005 on the heels of the Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed at least 226,000 people.

That massive disaster triggered a huge focus on saving lives, leading to major investment in early warning and evacuation systems, Wahlström said.

At the time, however, it did not drive understanding of "why development is the key factor in how we create risks for ourselves", she added.

But that has shifted more recently, as climate change has begun making

weather disasters more frequent and severe.

"The awareness and, to some degree, the understanding of risk has increased dramatically and we have been unfortunately helped by the external environment," Wahlström said in a telephone interview from Stockholm.

When she talked to governments in preparation for the Sendai negotiations, they showed a "very strong anxiety about how risks are increasing, (saying), 'We don't have a sense of where we are going,'" she added. Key to getting disaster risks under control is communicating to officials, businesses and individuals that failing to do so limits their ability to achieve economic growth and sustainable development.

They need to think through what they must plan for if current trends for worsening extreme weather, together with expanding populations and cities, continue in the next 50 years, Wahlström said.

And when trying to persuade politicians to invest in stronger, smarter infrastructure to keep people out of harm's way, it is crucial to explain how that can bring short-term returns too - like avoiding millions of dollars in damage when the next big flood hits, she added.

That applies in both poor and rich countries.

"This is a truly universal issue," she said. "Every country has an interest in reducing the cost of (disasters), so they can use (the money) for other issues."

During her stint as disaster reduction chief, Wahlström witnessed tangible change at the local level - from alerting and evacuation systems that protected people when Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, to Canada deciding to build a disaster prevention mechanism that starts with communities.

Yet there are also places where the international community failed to follow through on its newfound global enthusiasm for disaster risk reduction, such as in Afghanistan, she added.

Wahlström, a former aid official who worked at the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan as it was emerging from conflict, said wealthy donor governments missed an opportunity to make the fragile state more resilient to natural disasters. Foreign military trucks and equipment were used to help Afghanistan rebuild and recover from war, and little funding went to shoring up national institutions to manage hazards like earthquakes and annual flooding.

"The Afghan authorities now have no capability to deal with this issue," Wahlström said. "That was not part of the development investment and it should have been."

While U.N. and other aid agencies have improved protection against disasters for conflict-displaced people, labour rules and mindsets need to be changed so that migrants and refugees can use their own skills to keep themselves and their communities safe, she noted.

Wahlström's hope is that the international agreements sealed in 2015 - from the Sendai framework to new Sustainable Development Goals and a climate change deal - will foster a more joined-up approach to the world's problems, including disasters.

"What (the agreements) hopefully have achieved is a much stronger policy drive from the global side" to showcase country progress and ensure international development aid addresses disaster risk, she added.

This month, Robert Glasser, an Australian who was previously secretary general of development agency CARE International, took over from Wahlström as head of the UNISDR. (Reuters)

### (5) Ghani under ...

several commissions and task teams accomplished their work with complete sovereignty and freedom," he said.

Regarding the job of the Kunduz fact finding team, Hashemi said: "For instance you take the job of Kunduz fact finding team, the government of Afghanistan took several measures on the basis of the recommendations offered by the team and likewise, see the electoral reform commission which is assigned to recommend reform packages for electoral systems. The government is implementing the plan," he said.

This comes after TOLONews recently accessed a number of reports of several commissions including that of ghost teachers, ghost students; corruption in contracts of the ministry of defense; and corruption in the procurement department and appointment procedure in the e-NIC

department.

Despite these reports had been finalized, details have not been shared with the people. (Tolonews)

### (6) New Council ...

Stability of Afghanistan is completely ready to cooperate with the government," council spokesman Massoud Trishtwal said.

However, most council members refused to talk to the media, but a spokesman for the council announced that the holding of parliamentary and district council elections was not recommended without necessary reforms in the election system first being implemented.

"Alongside councils and meetings, we have also formulated a number of practical proposals to government which can help the government to perform better in various sectors," another spokesman for the council, Ajmal, said.

As calls for the implementation of reforms in the nation's election system increases, the Office of the Chief Executive Officer of Afghanistan reiterated government's determination to go with the reforms on the basis of the political agreement.

"The government is committed to the implementation of the provision of the political agreement, but the constitutional amendment Loya Jirga will be convened - with a slight delay - due to certain problems, because before that the parliamentary and district councils elections need to be held," Jawed Faisal, deputy spokesman to Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah said. (Tolonews)

### (7) Preconditions...

meanwhile said that they welcome peace talks only if they are transparent, that the nation is kept in the loop of all processes, that an end is put to the war, ensure the sovereignty of Afghanistan and maintain dignity of Afghans.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, said that China was ready to work with all sides of the quadrilateral talks to facilitate the advancement of Afghan peace talks. However, he stressed that Afghanistan's sovereignty should be respected. (Tolonews)

### (8) Migrant Flows...

after talks with Turkey's EU Affairs Minister Volkan Bozkir in Ankara. "The goal of this (action plan) is to stem the flow. 2,000-3,000 (arrivals) a day is not stemming the flow. But we are in this together and we will work on that," he added.

Under the November 29 deal, EU leaders pledged three billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in aid for the more than 2.2 million Syrian refugees sheltering in Turkey, in exchange for Ankara acting to reduce the flow.

Under pressure from voters at home, EU leaders want to reduce the numbers coming to the European Union after over one million migrants reached Europe in 2015.

Yet there has so far been no sign of a significant reduction in the numbers of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and other troubled states undertaking the perilous crossing in rubber boats from Turkey's western coast to EU-member Greece.

Turkish authorities on a single day last week found the bodies of at least 36 migrants, including several children, washed up on beaches and floating off its western coast after their boats sank.

In the latest tragedy Monday, two women and a five-year-old girl died when a boat carrying 16 Afghan migrants sank in bad weather off the Aegean coast, reports said.

"I believe we need to speed our work to get some of the projects in place," said Timmermans.

"I also said to the minister that we need... to be very explicit on what elements of the action plan have already been implemented and where we still need work."

Bozkir said that Turkey was expending "intense efforts" on halting the migrant flow, saying the Turkish authorities were stopping 500 people every day.

"We will try to reduce the pressure on illegal immigration by giving work permits to Syrians in Turkey," he added.

This idea has been floated on occasion by the Turkish government but many people remain hostile to the measure on the grounds it could take away jobs from qualified Turks. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said last week it estimated that in the first three days of 2016 alone just over 5,000 migrants and refugees crossed into Greece despite the onset of winter weather.

With concern also growing in Europe over the migrant influx after a spate of New Year sex assaults in Germany, Pope Francis urged Euro-

pean governments to keep welcoming new arrivals.

He said the sheer size of the influx was causing "inevitable problems" and raising concerns about "changes in the cultural and social structures" of host countries.

But Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a keynote address earlier that Europe had waited too long to react to the influx.

"Unfortunately the international community heard our warnings about the migration crisis very late," Cavusoglu told a meeting of Turkish ambassadors in Ankara.

"They only understood the seriousness when the body of tiny Aylan washed up on one of our beaches and wave after wave of migrants came to their own doors."

The images of three-year-old Syrian refugee Aylan Kurdi lying face-down on a Turkish beach in September 2015 spurred Europe into greater action on the migrant crisis. (AFP)

### (9) Govt. Blasted...

professor at Kabul University, believes that by coming up with such remarks, NATO has its own axe to grind.

Even though foreign forces fought alongside the ANSF in Kunduz and Helmand, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) said that Afghan security forces are capable of defeating militants.

Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the MoD, admitted that Afghan forces were under pressure this year, but said: "Our forces proved that they have the capability to defeat militants and not let them reach their goals."

The issue of ghost soldiers has however become a problem in Helmand and it has even increased the casualties among Afghan forces, officials believe. As many as 700 troops were killed and more than 500 others wounded in Helmand province over the past three months. (Tolonews)

### (10) Iran Seeks...

political ends. "

He also called for stopping what he called "Saudi Arabia's support of extremism", saying that "If the Arab state continues this policy, it will face myriad of problems... since the regional states have expressed their discontent with the rise of tensions." On Sunday, Jaber Ansari said that Iran was seeking to sooth tensions in the region including its frictions with Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia had adopted the policy of confronting the regional realities and they seek escalation of tensions and hostility with Iran, Jaber Ansari said. (Xinhua)

### (11) Khalifa Foundation ...

earthquake benefited from the relief aid. Each family has got 50 kg of flour, 10 kilograms of cooking oil and 10 kilograms of sugar and 10 kilograms of beans and four blankets of large size.

For his part, the governor of Kunar province has praised the efforts of the United Arab Emirates for providing relief aid to the victims and the poor in Afghanistan and extended thanks and appreciation to the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, which always ready to provide aid to the Afghan. (WAM)

### (12) Afghanistan ...

Afghanistan - by utilizing the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor - will be able to revive the ancient Silk Road.

This comes after TRACECA members in their 11th meeting lent their support to Afghanistan's membership in the organization.

The minister said that during his recent trip to Tehran, the Iranian government pledged to provide technical support to Afghanistan in order for them to gain membership of the corridor.

"Iran announced its support to Afghanistan and sent an official letter to relative countries that it agrees with our membership in TRACECA," he added.

Meanwhile, a number of lawmakers welcomed government's bid to find better alternatives for the current transit routes.

They said the membership of TRACECA, despite resolving transit problems, will prepare the ground for the revival of the Silk Road.

Helmand MP Nasima Niazi said she believes that it is a good step and will yield good results.

TRACECA was founded in 1993 and serves as a transport corridor between Europe and Asia, via Black Sea, the Caucasus and Caspian Sea. Turkey, Armenia, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Georgia and

Moldova are its member countries. (Tolonews)

### (13) Russia Ready...

Putin said he referred not only to terrorism, but also crimes like human trafficking, environmental protection and many other common challenges.

The president added that Russia's willingness to cooperate "does not mean that it is us who should agree with everything that others decide over these or other matters."

Meanwhile, Putin lamented that the European division has not been overcome since the end of the Cold War. (Xinhua)

### (14) More Electricity...

and half years the works will be completed.

In Kunduz City, approximately 7,000 residents, as well as schools, small businesses and governmental departments are expected to benefit from the electricity supply. The extension of 20 kV transmission line and the construction of four transformer substations and a low voltage distribution network will be finished in about one year.

Both contracts were signed at the Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) headquarters by the Regional Infra-structure Development Fund (RIDF). RIDF signed on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW). Afghan and German officials joined the ceremony, including Eng. Hamidullah Anwari, provincial director of DABS in Kunduz as well as Eng. Ghulam Hussain Anwari, provincial director of DABS in Baghlan.

Besides providing electricity to a number of residents in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces, these projects also aim to enhance the governmental departments' ability to conduct similar projects in the future. Experts from RIDF will offer technical training to concerned Afghan governmental departments and will provide support throughout the duration of the projects. Thereby, government employees can gain practical experience on how to manage such complex projects and will be better prepared to independently conduct future development projects.

The RIDF program is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank and contracted to the joint venture of Grontmij-GOPA-INTegration for rolling out the programme. RIDF allows financial resource allocation by the respective Provincial Development Committees on provincial level, realizing proposals of their provincial line departments. (Wadsam)

### (15) Afghans Warmly...

target of 216 for victory that Zimbabwe fell 81 runs short of achieving. Shahzad told TOLONews immediately after arriving that the team worked hard to defeat a strong team - Zimbabwe. He said the team was very happy with their new coach, Inzaman-ul-Haq, and they hoped to beat top teams in future.

"Long live Afghanistan," he said. A member of the team's management body said that Afghanistan had played extremely well in Sharjah and that they have improved progressively over the past few months.

Messages of congratulations streamed in on Monday from numerous senior officials. (Tolonews)

### (16) NDS Thwart...

Ibrahim, NDS added.

The Taliban militants group has not commented regarding the detention of the group's suicide bombers and militants which comes amid rampant insurgency activities by the militant group across the country. (KP)

### (17) Shahzad and ...

his way into the top 10 of the ICC Player Rankings for T20 Bowlers, for a career-best eighth spot.

This comes as the Afghan team managed to secure place among the top ten teams in the latest ranking for One Day International (ODI) of the International Cricket Council (ICC) earlier. (KP)

### (18) £100,000...

accident caused relatively minor injuries, it gave rise to the condition of fibromyalgia.

"It is common ground that he suffers from that now and will suffer from widespread pain, albeit of varying intensity, for the rest of his life."

Mr Murphy, who comes from a Forces family, was discharged from the Army in September 2013 and

now works as an estate workforce manager in the NHS. (Agencies)

### (19) Turkey Plans ...

war, now in its sixth year. Another 200,000 Iraqi refugees also shelter there, and migrants from Iran, Afghanistan and Africa all use Turkey as a transit point to Europe.

Turkey, which aspires to join the EU, struck a deal with the EU in November to prevent migrants from traveling to Europe in return for 3 billion euro (\$3.3 billion) in cash, a deal on visas and renewed talks on joining the 28-nation bloc. (Reuters)

### (20) Japanese PM ...

during his trip which spanned Monday, a national holiday here, also said that Japan would increase sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) following its fourth testing last week of a nuclear device. (Xinhua)

### (21) Aid Convoy ...

Madaya has become a focal issue for Syrian opposition leaders, who told a U.N. envoy last week they would not take part in talks with the government, slated for later this month, until it and other sieges are lifted.

The United Nations said on Thursday the Syrian government had agreed to allow access to Madaya, where U.N. officials say there have been credible reports of people dying of starvation. (Reuters)

### (22) Ukraine Seek...

November 2015, agricultural trade turnover between the two countries reached 233 million dollars, with Ukraine's exports amounting to 224 million dollars and imports standing at 9 million dollars.

Last year, Ukraine supplied to Kazakhstan grains, cocoa-beans, confectionery, cheese and yogurt, and imported tobacco, fish, chocolate and food oils from the Central Asian country. (Xinhua)

### (23) Kenya, Canada ...

Taxation agreement. The envoy noted that the two nations have also signed an agreement on coding sharing on airline flights. "The aim is to make travel between the two countries easier even as we consider the possibility of introducing direct flights," he said. (Xinhua)

### (24) Racism ...

emerged on social media over the past few days, sparking a public uproar.

It all started when Penny Sparrow, an estate agent, labelled blacks as "monkeys" who were released onto public beaches in Durban during the Christmas and New Year holidays. (Xinhua)

### (25) Al-Qaeda ...

reading the statement in English. With a long beard, the two hostages, visibly in good health, urged their respective governments "to do everything possible to secure their freedom."

The spokesman said AQIM's demands "remained the same as those issued in 2012," without giving an indication on the nature of the demands. (Xinhua)

### (26) UN Chief ...

humanitarian law, which explicitly protects hospitals and medical personnel, according to a statement from his spokesperson. The attack is the latest of a series of attacks on health facilities in Yemen, following those on the MSF-supported Haydan Medical Hospital in Saada and a mobile health clinic in Taiz last year. (Xinhua)

### (27) IMF Boss ...

armed groups, and the drop in oil prices which dipped by 70 percent when compared to June 2014. The Cameroonian economy remained stable and it is expected to expand by 6 percent in 2015 and improve on this growth in 2016," the IMF boss said.

She said the country's economy will perform better on condition that the government adopts good policies, especially in terms of managing the scarce public resources. (Xinhua)

### (28) China to ...

quality, said Wang. Wang highlighted the nation's need to allow all couples to have two children.

The new family planning law took effect on Jan. 1, ending the one-child policy that had been in place for decades.

He said the timing for the new policy is good, considering the trend of a declining labor force, and rising demographic dependency ratio, which rose from 34.2 in 2010 to 36.2 in 2014, in addition to the population of child-bearing women, which has dropped from the peak of 380 million in 2011. (Xinhua)