

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

Daily
Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

July 17, 2019

Regional and National Consensus Crucial to Peace Process

Afghan officials have constantly reiterated that regional stakeholders carry heavy weight in Afghanistan's peace process and could nudge the Taliban to come to the table with the Afghan government.

The seventh round of meeting between the US and the Taliban representatives in Doha, Qatar's capital, and the intra-Afghan dialogue generated optimism as political officials believed that Afghanistan had been very close to peace.

Subsequent to the latest round of talks, China, Russia, and the US, along with Pakistani representatives, held their third consultation on the Afghan peace process in Beijing. The four sides discussed the ongoing situation in Afghanistan and joint efforts for realizing a political settlement to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and beyond. They also emphasized the significance of the trilateral consensus and the country's peace process held in Moscow in April. They further welcomed intra-Afghan meetings held in Moscow and Doha.

The four sides said the talks should be "Afghan-owned" and "Afghan-led" and urged all parties to take steps to reduce violence, which would lead to a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire.

The four states are heavyweight stakeholders in Afghanistan's peace process. The US has discussed peace process with the Taliban and made strides in this regard. To show its seriousness, Washington discussed troop withdrawal from Afghanistan - also reduced the number of its soldiers. Hence, the US troop pullout is in the agenda of the US-Taliban negotiations if the two sides reach an agreement.

Pakistan is also one of the heavyweights and will be able to nudge the Taliban to peace table with the Kabul government. Islamabad released the Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar to support the US-Taliban talks. Believing in the essential role of Pakistan, Afghan officials have constantly urged her to engage in Afghanistan reconciliation process and use her leverage to broker intra-Afghan dialogue.

Russia also has leverage on the Taliban since she hosted intra-Afghan dialogues seeking to open talks parallel to those of the US. However, neither the Afghan government nor the US was interested in Moscow's individual struggle for Afghanistan peace process. Meanwhile, political pundits believed that it would mar the peace process and bestow international credibility to the Taliban. But Moscow's push for intra-Afghan dialogue in the frame of the four-side meeting will be productive and the Afghan government and regional stakeholders will appreciate such an engagement.

China, which has a close tie with Pakistan, tried to bring Kabul and Islamabad closer and also play a constructive role in Afghanistan peace process. Beijing has always reiterated its support to "Afghan-led" and "Afghan-owned" peace talks. Being a strong contributor to global peace and prosperity, China is ready to play a constructive role in Afghanistan peace process. China has also been an active member of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, consists of US, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

The recent four-side meeting in Beijing creates hope that regional consensus will be formed for the intra-Afghan dialogue, which has been considered highly essential for fruitful talks and urged by political pundits since the beginning.

It is self-explanatory that collective efforts will be more fruitful than those of individual. That is, if regional states open talks with the Taliban individually and without consultation with the Afghan government, it will not bear the desired result and the situation will be rather complicated. Therefore, regional stakeholders have to continue their collective efforts to broker intra-Afghan dialogue and support the relevant parties to end the conflict. In short, the collective efforts of regional and global states, including the US, Russia, China, Germany, Pakistan, and Qatar, are highly significant. The more countries put their weight behind the peace process, the more productive peace talks will be. Since a peaceful and stable Afghanistan will be in the interests of the region, regional states have to engage constructively in the process.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government and political factions have to form an inclusive national consensus. Heads of political parties and jihadi leaders have to support the government's stance on peace talks. Hence, selective approach, as some Afghan politicians have adopted, towards peace talks will neither lead to peace and nor be acceptable to Afghan nation. If political figures really pursue national interests, they have to stand with the government.

To pursue fruitful peace process, forming regional and national consensus is highly essential. Regional and global stakeholders have to push for intra-Afghan dialogue as well as end of conflict. Both the Afghan government and the Taliban have to hold direct talks to resolve their issues before it is too late.

The Quality of life Depends on Quality Personal Health Management

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

When we discuss about life management several keywords come into our mind such as time management, health management, behavior management, home management, expenses management, sleep management, and stress management and so on. This article is going to discuss about personal health management and health awareness which is considered a great issue in Afghanistan. In Afghan social literacy, the word "health" is used when someone is faced a serious health trouble. Nobody knows what personal health management is? How the quality of our lives depends on quality of good health? Why kids and adults lost their concentration in their learning life? Why people become bad-tempered and nervous? Why sometimes we feel lethargic? Why our public health system's view remained very traditional and confined to the reactive programs? Why our universities are not able to explain the importance of health and nutritious awareness in the country.

The real answer to these questions lies in modernization of our views about health and health care system. As long as we do not change our mentality regarding health and health system, we would not be able to have a healthy generation in the future. If we do not have a healthy nutritious system and good public awareness, our people will keep blindly using harmful antibiotics, chemical medicine and useless foods. Due to lack of awareness our people sell their natural and rich agricultural food products but buy useless stuffs and harmful medicine while inflicting negative consequences in our society. In the end of the day, Afghanistan would get the place of most dangerous places in the world to live a healthy life.

Health reports show that Afghanistan is one the world countries with the lowest life expectancy, around 45 years, while comparing to the developed countries averaged with some 85 years of life expectancy. However, there are multiple factors blamed for this issue such as insecurity, poverty, addiction, collapsed infrastructure, devastated cities and communities, broken families and psychological pain. But we tend to pay less attention on new factors such as health awareness and health management. For example, people tend to eat what they desire not what they need. Due to lack of awareness we spend a lot of money on medicine but not on food and body immune system. As a consequence, more than half of Afghan girls and boys suffer to damage their minds and bodies that cannot be undone, especially if they are poorly nourished in the crucial first three years of life.

Undeniably, poverty factor plays a very destructive role in our society, but as facts and evidence shows both rich and poor people equally suffer from some non-poverty factors. The non-poverty factors can include lack of lack of drinking enough water, good sleep management, lack of physical exercise, lack of good socialization

and so on. One of the very common problems that cause a lot health problem to both rich and poor people equally is dehydration. Many are not aware that water is essential for our bodies to function such as removing waste, and carrying nutrients and oxygen around our body. Since we lose water daily through urine, bowel movements, perspiration, and breathing, we need to replenish our water intake. Furthermore, drinking water helps in losing weight. As study carried out among overweight or obese people showed that water drinkers lose 4.5 more pound than a control group! The researchers believe that it's because drinking more water helps fill stomach, making one feel less hungry and less likely to overeat.

The second factor that affects both the rich and the poor is bad behavior. The research findings has already shown that healthful behaviors can help stay active and healthy into age of 60s, 70s, and beyond. While we often stress about small stuff - the guests are here, and we are not ready! - It's the nagging, long-running forms of stress, such as a family dispute, that put our longevity at risk. Chronic stress hastens the cellular deterioration that leads to premature aging and a vast array of serious diseases. This sort of cell death "turns out to be one of the strongest predictors of early diseases of aging and in many studies of early mortality has already confirmed the issue. The remedy suggested by experts to peace with the people, forgive the family, forgive ourselves and put the past behind.

Unfortunately, half of the Afghan population aged 15 years or older is affected by the last mentioned issue and it is similar to communicable disease and includes several types akin to: depression, anxiety, hyperactivities, aggressions and post traumatic stress disorder. These disorders contribute to community and domestic violence and to the high levels of malnutrition in the country as they adversely affect maternal care giving in diverse ways. In addition, existing superstitions and social restrictions are big challenges for women's access to mental health services in Afghanistan.

By and large, human lifespan has dramatically increased over the last century due to discovering multiple factors effect on health. The most common ones are consist of physical exercise, good eating, good habit and good behavior. Natural changes to the body as we age can lead to a gradual loss of muscle, reduced energy, and achy joints. These changes may make it tempting to move less and sit more. But doing that can raise our risk for disease, disability, and even death. Academic evidence shows that the best way to boost the chance of living a long and active life is to follow the advice we likely heard from our parents or sport trainers: eat well, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and stay away from bad habits.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

The Fork Is Mightier than the Wall

By: Danielle Nierenberg

The word "migration" conjures images of war, natural disaster, and severe economic distress. All are important reasons why people seek refuge far from home. But the single most powerful driver of migration may well be food - or, rather, the lack of it. As of 2017, some 821 million people worldwide - about one in every nine - faced chronic food deprivation. While some progress has been made to reduce extreme hunger, the overall number of chronically hungry people continues to rise.

The link with migration is clear. When people in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America cannot feed themselves and their families, they often leave home. According to a study by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), each percentage-point increase in food insecurity increases refugee outflows by 1.9%.

Those facing food insecurity often demand better conditions at home. In the Arab world, "bread riots" have erupted regularly since the mid-1980s. Increases in food prices, particularly for wheat, triggered the Arab Spring protests that began in Tunisia in 2010.

If initial food shortages were not enough to motivate a person to migrate, the ensuing social unrest and conflict often are, not least because they further strain food supplies. As the WFP reports, food insecurity is "a significant determinant of the incidence and intensity of armed conflict." For each additional year of conflict, refugee outflows increase by 0.4%.

According to the Observatory on Food and Migration, many migrants are single men, who leave their female relatives behind to run their depleted farms. In North Africa, women now account for 43% of all farmers, according to the World Bank - up from about 30% in 1980.

These women operate at a significant disadvantage. For example, the World Bank reports that, in Latin America, "when women take on primary responsibility for the family farm, they face certain gender-specific difficulties, including difficulties hiring and supervising labor and acquiring technical knowledge about farming."

Similarly, though female farmers represent 70% of Senegal's workforce, the Observatory on Food and Migration reports that only men are allowed to make decisions about agricultural production or farm operations. This makes it extremely difficult to achieve strong farm output, exacerbating food shortages.

Those migrants who make it to Europe or the United States often form the backbone of their new countries' agricultural sectors. According to a study by the MacroGeo think tank and the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition (BCFN), more than half of all farmworkers in southern Italy are migrants, and more than three million migrants work on American farms. The US government estimates that about half of all farmworkers are undocumented immigrants.

Many of these workers live in conditions resembling slavery, toiling in harsh conditions for very low wages. In Southern Italy, for example, migrant farmworkers often have been recruited through the so-called caporalato system, in which criminal gangs - led by "caporali" - organize groups of migrant laborers, provide them with food and housing, and transport them (for exorbitant fees) from their homes to the fields.

The laborers' workdays can last 16 hours, and when they return home, minuscule wages in hand, they face appalling living conditions. In one reported case, 800 workers were found living with only five showers. Because the caporali's fee is deducted from workers' wages, farmers embrace this system, which also enables them to avoid payroll taxes. And those farmers - not just in Italy, but across Europe and in the US (where undocumented agricultural workers are similarly exploited) - often already benefit from generous subsidies, which encourage them to produce too much food.

The surplus food may be exported at such low prices that farmers and food producers in developing countries cannot compete. Or it may be wasted: according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, one-third of all food produced globally is either lost or discarded, in what amounts to a gross misuse of the resources - from labor to water - used to produce it.

The worst offenders are the most technologically advanced countries, according to the Food Sustainability Index, produced by the BCFN and the Economist Intelligence Unit. In agricultural sustainability rankings - which includes food waste - the US and the United Kingdom rank 45th and 49th, respectively, out of 67 countries.

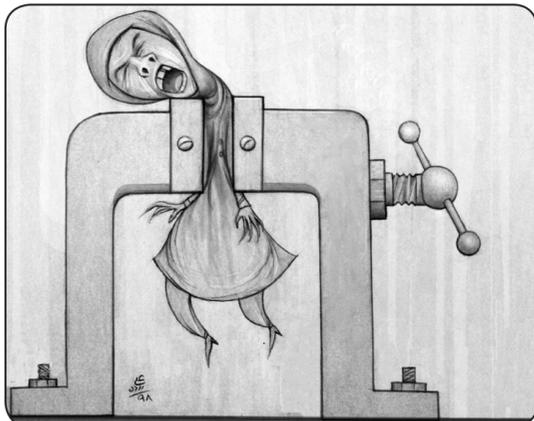
In contrast, less developed countries show some surprising successes. Latin America, East Asia, and the Pacific perform well on food loss and waste, with four countries from each region ranking in the top 20. Ethiopia, Kenya, and India are also among the countries with strong strategies for minimizing food loss.

A challenge as complex as migration cannot be addressed simply through stricter immigration laws, let alone a border wall like the one US President Donald Trump seeks to build on his country's southern frontier with Mexico. Instead, policymakers must tackle migration's underlying causes - beginning with a broken global food system.

For developed-country governments, that means rethinking agricultural subsidies and implementing targeted policies to reduce food loss and waste. Developing-country governments, for their part, must take steps to mitigate gender inequality.

There is little time - and food - to waste.

Danielle Nierenberg is President of Food Tank: The Think Tank for Food and a member of the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition Foundation's advisory board.

Daily
Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida
Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان
The Daily Afghanistan Ma

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.