



**Written statement of Mr. Mohamed Hassan Faizee, Directorate General for Security Cooperation
Border Affairs, and Transboundary Waters, Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019-2021), for the SIWI
High Level Panel on Water Diplomacy: Navigating a resilient future, Digital World Water Week.**

24 August 2021

Afghanistan is currently going through a well-known and exceedingly difficult time. The international community very much needs to stand with the people in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is one of the most geo-strategic regions in the world where disagreements over climate change, and conflict over water in general, are the ultimate conflict multipliers. Both alone, and in combination with one another, they aggravate fragile situations and contribute to social upheaval.

This year's World Water Week is about Building Resilience Faster. This will not be possible without helping all vulnerable countries across the globe, including Afghanistan. Afghanistan is home to five major shared international watercourses: Panj/Amu Darya, Helmand, Kabul/Kunar, Hari Rud, Murghab shared with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. 84% of Afghanistan's surface area is included in the international drainage basins associated with these shared international watercourses. In addition, 87% of Afghanistan's population lives within one of the international drainage basins associated with these shared international watercourses. For these reasons alone the ability of Afghanistan to have the necessary human and financial resources, and strategies, to meaningfully enter into negotiations with Afghanistan's riparian neighbours is crucially important.

Until recently Afghanistan had been making remarkable progress regarding the conservation and management of Afghanistan's shared international waters. Highlights include signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Tajikistan in 2014, later extended until 2024, focusing on technical cooperation and data sharing. A similar agreement was recently finalized with Turkmenistan and negotiations were ongoing with Uzbekistan. A Strategic Cooperation agreement between Afghanistan and Iran regarding the Helmand River was also at the final stage of negotiation by the Heads of States. The agreement also envisaged cooperation on the Hamoon wetlands as well as Harirud River.

Water scarcity remains an enormous challenge in both Afghanistan, and neighbouring countries, especially Iran and Pakistan. A number of Afghanistan provinces are currently undergoing an especially serious drought which is leaving many communities vulnerable. Women and children being often most affected. There is also a compelling need to support the acquisition of drinking water in major cities and groundwater depletion is a serious challenge, especially in Kabul.

In summary Afghanistan now needs more help than ever from the international community.

On 18 August, Khaled Hosseini, Afghani author of "The Kite Runner" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns" stated: "Many, many Afghans bought into what the U.S. was selling. They aligned themselves with American objectives, they bought into American initiatives, fully aware that that would make them targets in the eyes of insurgent groups like the Taliban. They did it anyway in the hope of a better future for the country, in the hope of a better future for the children, in the hope that the country would become more stable and more peaceful, more representative of all sections of Afghan society. I believe they were unbelievably courageous to do it.

So I want people to reach out to their representatives, to their leaders, and say, We have a moral obligation to those people, we have to evacuate those people. We cannot allow our partners — the U.S. has been calling the Afghan people "our partners" for 20 years — we cannot allow our partners to be murdered. To be imprisoned, to be beaten and tortured and persecuted now that we have left. We have a moral obligation to follow through."

Sincerely,

Mohamed Hassan Faizee

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