

**Speech by the Prime Minister
at the Lunch for
President Hamid Karzai**

(September 16, 2010)

- Your Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
- Honorable Ministers and Parliamentarians,
- Excellencies,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour for me to extend to Your Excellency and to the members of your delegation a warm welcome to Pakistan.

We recall your important visit to Islamabad in March this year. It marked a distinct step forward in our bilateral relations. For us Afghanistan's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity carry great significance. We wish stability, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Our two countries enjoy special bonds of friendship and brotherhood. Many affinities bind us together. Our two countries also share many common challenges, common aspirations and a common future. In other words, our destinies are interlinked.

Excellency,

We are meeting at a time when floods of an unprecedented scale have devastated Pakistan.

These floods have affected the lives and properties of 20 million Pakistanis. There is colossal human and material loss. Crops and the livestock worth billions of dollars have been wiped out.

Over 3.5 million children are at high risk of deadly water-borne diseases. Around 70% of the roads and bridges in the flooded areas have been affected. The challenges posed by the floods are not yet over. Reconstruction and rehabilitation will be a huge task. We shall need constant engagement of the international community to face this challenge.

Pakistanis are deeply touched by the generous assistance extended to them by Afghanistan including one million dollars, four helicopters for relief operations, four tons of medicines and a medical team. This will remain an unforgettable gesture for us.

Excellency,

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have suffered immensely from terrorism and extremism. We are resolutely determined to eradicate this menace from our region.

Pakistan fully supports Your Excellency's efforts to promote stability, peace and national reconciliation. The successful holding of the Afghan Peace Jirga and the Kabul Conference were a testimony to the sincere and important endeavours of Your Excellency's government to usher a new era.

An Afghan led process holds the only promise for a durable solution. It is for the people of Afghanistan themselves to decide their future. Pakistan will be happy to assist, if so required.

Excellency,

Under the democratic government in Pakistan, we have already turned a new leaf in our relations with Afghanistan. Now we need to impart a new momentum to our mutual cooperation and forge a win-win partnership for shared prosperity.

Despite resource constraints, Pakistan has contributed to Afghanistan's reconstruction. We remain committed to help our Afghan brethren all the way.

Our unbreakable bonds of faith, shared history and geography impel us to join our efforts for peace and common development. This indeed is the vision that the two solemn Joint Declarations, signed between Pakistan and Afghanistan, seek to advance.

Our current bilateral trade of around US \$ 2 billion is not commensurate with the potential. We will make joint efforts to increase the trade to \$ 5 billion by 2015. The conclusion of negotiations on Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement is also a matter of satisfaction.

In conclusion, let me assure Your Excellency, once again, of our unswerving commitment to Afghanistan's stability, peace and development.

This is our pledge. We will continue working with you for its fulfillment.

Thank your.
