



## PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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### **Long-term business supportive policy is the way to survive-Politics can wait Zubair Motiwala**

PAJCCI held committee meeting at Karachi, attended by large number of business community members from Pakistan & Afghanistan, FPCCI, government officials from Transit Trade, Pakistan Customs, Ministry of Commerce, NLC, TDAP, KPT, National Bank of Pakistan, representatives of trade associations and media.

The objective of this meeting was to review last year's PAJCCI performance and devise future road map aimed at removing trade barriers, deliberating and recommending measures to realize trade potential between the two countries, identifying ways & means to develop sustainable policy framework for long term bilateral and transit trade using each other's capability and resources, capitalizing on the strengths of private stakeholders, B2B connectivity, engagement of both governments, encouraging and involving businesswomen and continue the active role of PAJCCI in betterment of the regional economy.

Zubair Motiwala; Chairman PAJCCI stated with continued momentum of meetings and engagement between B2B segment we have realized many positives like changes in governmental policies despite political instability in both countries, successfully engaged Ministers on both sides, improved various processes and facilitated policy frameworks, removed trade barriers, involved diverse B2B segments in bilateral and transit trade deliberations, provided practical solutions across borders. The process took time but has been progressive. He also welcomed newly elected President and office bearers of PAJCCI and thanked previous team for their tireless services. He congratulated PAJCCI for successfully involving women business leaders especially from Afghanistan who are now regularly attending various trade forums and are actively participating in economic activities. Women led businesses are key to socio-economic uplift in both the countries.

He provided overview of recent impact on trade activities due to government change in Pakistan and damages caused by recent floods. He informed the forum that PAJCCI is actively pursuing various matters related to detention & demurrage charges, use of terminals and dock facilities for increasing transit trade, tracker fee for containers, use of KPT, QICT, KICT & SAPT terminals

especially for transit trade via Afghanistan. He highlighted that due to efforts of PAJCCI long pending SRO on Cross stuffing has been issued with support of Minister of Commerce. He apprised that his recent meetings with Ministers of Commerce & Finance have been highly positive and government has shown interest in improving bilateral & transit trade with Afghanistan & CAR respectively. PAJCCI will provide technical assistance to government at all levels in development of long-term trade policy which shall not be impacted by any political changes and instability.

He said that both countries need to identify products which are in high demand in either country and decide upon zero duties on such items instead of importing from far flung countries which is costly and time consuming. At present Pakistan requires raw cotton, fresh fruits and Coal from Afghanistan whereas Pakistan can export various food, health care, cement and other finished goods.

Khan Jan Alokozai; Co-Chairman acknowledging that arranging frequent meetings and forums where problems are not only discussed but resolved to large extent is highly commendable. He proposed Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries with zero taxation for items in high demand by each side. The high tax on coal exports from Afghanistan has been escalated to High Economic Council and will be resolved in coming weeks. He said that despite several difficulties, PAJCCI's focus on trade development has never shifted and re-iterated that both chapters will continue this journey by increasing involvement of B2B sector, becoming bridge between CAR and each other on either side which is already reflecting as transit trade has increased by 50% as compared to previous year. He said elements trying to create obstacles in PAK-AFG relations will be dealt with focus and determination of PAJCCI leadership & team; the journey of peace & prosperity will continue. He emphasized the need of both governments to rise beyond politics and develop strong long term supportive bilateral and transit trade policy. We will facilitate coal and cotton importers of Pakistan at B2B and governmental level along with advisory on joint investment in these sectors.

SVP FPCCI Suleman Chawla said that of all the chambers, PAJCCI has been most vibrant & productive chamber in the area of land route trade. The success is visible as a result of sheer determination and focus despite difficulties and obstacles. He offered FPCCI and his personal support in PAJCCI's endeavors.

Newly elected PAJCCI President Qazi Zahid Hussain thanked the forum and assured that he will use his experience to push forward PAJCCI's agenda of regional economic uplift and will pursue all pending issues with respective stakeholders.

DG Transit Trade Iftikhar Hussain informed that many issues are being taken up by Pakistan Customs including tracker fee, terminal use for transit trade, role of customs at various border crossings and assured of full cooperation. He considers Zubair Motiwala and Khan Jan Alokozai the face of Pakistan & Afghanistan in economic progress.

Muhammad Ghani, newly elected VP PAJCCI informed that during the floods B2B stakeholders of Baluchistan worked together and ensured that all stuck up cargo of over 2000 trucks was successfully cleared at Chaman border crossing with support of security forces by increasing border timings. He requested that timings at Chaman border crossing shall be increased and cotton imports be facilitated through this border for achieving trade & revenue target.

The forum jointly endorsed Motiwala's resolution that B2B community can play active role in the rehabilitation of flood victims especially in severely affected areas of Badin, Dadu, Sanghar and Shikarpur and appealed to contribute in PAJCCI's flood relief fund

Secretary General PAJCCI; Faiza Zubair said that Executive management and team re-affirms its commitment to take up all means to raise the voice of business community to both governments and will do everything possible to continue the economic progress journey. Politics shall not impede the economic growth, both governments must work together for the betterment of people without further delay. During this testing time political leadership of both countries can create trust worthy economic relationship instead of unilateral actions.