

REMARKS BY

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AT

AFGHAN SYMPOSIUM FOR HUMANITARIAN AND LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

THE BAYAT FOUNDATION

“CREATING AN AFGHAN TRUSTED NETWORK REMARKS”

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Mrs. And Mr. Bayat,

Dear friends of Afghanistan,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to be with you this morning. I am honored to be here with many distinguished and dedicated friends of Afghanistan. Thank you for your hard work to improve the lives of the people of Afghanistan through development and philanthropic projects. The government and people of Afghanistan are grateful for the support and friendship of the American people and government.

I would especially like to recognize Mr. Ehsan Bayat, my dear friend, who has brought us here today and has become a true icon in leading development, investment, media and charitable and philanthropic work in Afghanistan. I also want to thank Mrs. Fatema Bayat, President and Executive Director of the Bayat Foundation for her sincere commitment and devotion for Afghanistan.

Today's symposium features a comprehensive agenda and dedicated experts in the field of development and philanthropic engagement. I want to congratulate the Bayat Foundation for taking this initiative, and thank you for your time and efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Individual philanthropic work has deep roots in Afghanistan, both through religious organizations and amongst families, neighbors and small communities. However, we need to further enhance Afghan institutional charitable mechanisms to channel resources and expertise to Afghanistan.

This institutional mechanism has been well-developed in the U.S. Americans gave an average of \$315 billion to charitable causes per year. Almost 90 percent of Americans are donating to charities and foundations. The generosity and compassion and sharing of the U.S. and its people is a great model for all of us around the world, especially in Afghanistan.

Fortunately, the Bayat Foundation has been once again at the forefront of institutional philanthropic work. In addition to generous donations by the Bayat family, it funnels donations from people around the world to needed projects and worked closely with the other NGO's to create a synergy and enhance efficiency. The foundation has funded projects that have educated Afghan children, built roads and hospitals, provided safe drinkable water, high-quality healthcare services, empowered women, promoted human rights, gender equality and fought poverty.

This symposium provides an excellent forum to expand such networks and exchange the unique expertise that you all have developed while working in Afghanistan. I am sure that you will find better ways to share and leverage the best practices.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have many dedicated experts here. I would very briefly discuss best practices for NGOs and philanthropic engagement in Afghanistan, as I learned it in the past 7 years.

First, **consult with people to determine needs at the grassroots level.** We should not come up with our own list of needs and priorities.

Second, **after the priority is set, see who else is doing something about it.** Consult and create synergy between NGOs, the private sector, civil society, government, elders and local leaders, parliamentarians, NATO, PRTs and donors. Avoid duplication of efforts at all costs.

Third, **deliver efficiently and on time.** Avoid waste and delays. Set clear parameters for what you are delivering. Do what you can do best.

I would like to thank you all for your sincere friendship and continued commitment to support Afghanistan. Please keep up the good work.

I wish you all a successful symposium.

Thank you.