

Joint Statement of the First Meeting of the India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Chabahar

The first meeting of the India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Chabahar Port was held in Mumbai on 12-13 April 2023. The meeting was chaired by Secretary (ER) and attended by the Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The special invitees for the event were the country representative of the UN World Food Program (UNWFP), Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Managing Director of Chabahar Free Zone and the Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

During the meeting, the Managing Director, India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) gave a comprehensive presentation on the facilities and the current operations at the Shahid Behesti Terminal, Chabahar Port. Country Representative for UNWFP made a presentation on the ongoing cooperation between India and UNWFP in Afghanistan for the delivery of wheat assistance. Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan emphasized the significance of Chabahar Port for the delivery of humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people and providing economic opportunities for the Afghan businessman and traders.

The Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to hold the next round of India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) in Iran along with the participation of the private sector. The participants welcomed the proposal.

The participants agreed on the following:

- a) Appreciated the role played of Shahid Behesti Terminal, Chabahar Port in facilitating the shipments of humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people. Since, IPGL took over operations in December 2018, India has utilized the port to ship a total of 2.5 million tons of wheat and two thousand tons of pulses to Afghanistan.
- b) Noted that the further development of regional connectivity is essential for enhancing trade and commerce between India and Central Asian countries in the context of their land-locked nature and lack of overland connectivity with India.
- c) Reaffirmed that the connectivity initiatives should confirm with international norms, rule of law, respect for international commitments, and is based on mutually agreed principles of sustainable connectivity, transparency, broad participation, local priorities, financial sustainability and respect

.for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries

d) Emphasized that the connectivity projects deserve priority attention and could be a force-)
.multiplier for trade and economic cooperation and contacts between countries and people

e) Agreed that connectivity requires the active participation of the private sector. In order to)
facilitate large-scale private investments in sustainable connectivity, the sides expressed their
commitment to implement relevant international standards, to ensure a level playing field for
.companies and to ensure reciprocal access to markets

f) Upon their request, Indian side offered capacity building programs to the officials/relevant)
.stakeholders of participating countries in the field of port management and logistics

The participants thanked the Republic of India for holding the first Joint Working Group Meeting .5
on joint use of Chabahar Port in Mumbai and agreed to hold the next round of meeting at a mutually
.convenient date

