

Afghanistan International Investment Conference
Afghan business delegation in Iran

15 January, 2008

Heading the Afghan business delegation to Iran, President and CEO of Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) Afghan Business Delegation to Tehran, Dr. Omar Zakhilwal and the managing Director of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI), Mehdi Ghazanfari, announced Afghanistan and Iran's preparation to expand their bilateral economic ties on Tuesday, January 15, 2008.

Dr. Zakhilwal noted that Afghanistan implements \$ 1.5 to 2 billion for civil, dam, road, silo and house-building projects per annum. He emphasized that given the commonalities in religion, culture, language and traditions, Iran can participate in significant number of the projects.

He voiced Afghanistan's preparedness to help Iran establish trade centers that reinforce bilateral economic relations.

Mr. Ghazanfari, for his part, said that TPOI had various programs to expand economic exchanges with Afghanistan, including holding regular meetings between both countries' businessmen and trade officials.

Attending the meet, the Secretary General of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mozaffar Alikhani, referred to lack of private banks and insurance companies as the main obstacle in the way of exports promotion, underlining the construction of such facilities.

Iran could increase its exports of products and technical and engineering services to Afghanistan by financially supporting the active technical and engineering companies, he added.

He finally put last year's non-oil exports to Afghanistan at \$500 million, announcing totally \$341 million worth of products and services were sent to the neighboring nation From March to December 2007.

Later, meeting with the Governor of Qazvin Province of Iran, Dr Zakhilwal said, "Investments made in Afghanistan by Iran are much more important to us than those made by any other country."

"Afghanistan prefers Iran's investments to those of other countries, thus, action should be taken to create more trading and investment opportunities for these two countries," he further reiterated.

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