



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Afghan CEO Pledges Support for Media Sector



The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

CEO of Afghanistan Dr. Abdullah Abdullah speaks at the first annual gathering of journalists and editors representing all 34 Afghan provinces.

***“We will stop the harassment faced by journalists at the hands of government officials.” –Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, CEO of Afghanistan***

“We will support you and stand by you,” H.E. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive of Afghanistan, told journalists gathered at a media conference in Kabul on April 26, the first of its kind in Afghanistan. The two-day conference, titled “Media and Transition Decade,” was organized by the Afghanistan Journalists Federation and supported by Internews through the USAID-funded Afghan Civic Engagement Program.

[Speaking on the first day of the conference](#), Dr. Abdullah reaffirmed the commitment of the national unity government (NUG) to safeguard freedom of speech in Afghanistan. He said that

the development of Afghanistan’s media sector has been a key achievement of Afghanistan’s past 13 years, and assured attendees that the NUG will take the necessary steps to cement the media’s advances, steps that include recognizing and protecting journalists’ rights. Afghanistan has made remarkable development in the sphere of freedom of speech since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, but violence against journalists persists.

In speaking about the new Access to Information Law, passed last December, Dr. Abdullah said President Ashraf Ghani’s administration is making efforts to ensure the law is implemented in letter and spirit. “Facts must never be kept hidden; the people must be informed even if it is bitter.

The 150 attendees were comprised of journalists and editors from outlets from all 34 provinces, as well as senior government officials and diplomats. Participants engaged in constructive dialogue about the role of media in a country grappling with declining financial support from the international community.

“I am glad to see journalists have gathered from all corners of the country to raise their views at the conference,” said Enqilabi Jawan from Laghman. “I wish this conference to be held every year – not only in Kabul, but in the provinces as well.”

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