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Responses to “Homeland – Scenarios for the Future of Afghan Civil Society”

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Introduction

On 3 September 2022 "Homeland: Scenarios for the Future of Afghan Civil Society" was publicly released by a team of 30 scenario team members, with the support of the Folke Bernadotte Academy and Reos Partners and the financial support of the European Union. The aim of the scenarios was to trigger critical thinking about the future of Afghanistan. The scenario release was accompanied by an engagement process that aimed to gather different view points to expand the perspectives conveyed by the scenarios.

This document summarizes the perspectives about the scenarios shared by 18 individuals. These perspectives were shared through a feedback form, through participation in an engagement event, through direct communication with Reos Partners, and through public media.

Feedback received

Feedback about the content of the scenarios

Several of those who shared their perspectives did not believe that the scenarios grasped the complex reality of Afghanistan. Some of the specific feedback provided included that:

- the role and ability of CSOs were not fully recognized
- the scenarios were optimistic and did not take into account the severity of the situation in Afghanistan
- the scenarios downplay the harsh treatment of the Afghan Civil Society by the de facto authorities and do not show the reality of the conflict.
- the scenarios do not adequately consider the external factors that influence the political, social, economic situation including, the role of the regional countries and international community
- the scenarios include action by Afghan political parties, however respondents expressed that within the current political context, the inclusion of political parties in dialogue seems implausible

Feedback about the utility of the scenarios

Feedback about the utility of the scenarios was highly varied. Some expressed appreciation for a unique, forward-looking tools which they felt provided useful analysis. Others expressed confusion about what the scenarios are or were meant to achieve.

Feedback about the scenarios process

Several respondents also questioned the process of creating the scenarios. Some doubted that the scenario team was adequately large or diverse to truly represent Afghan civil society. Others suggested that limiting the scenarios to civil society artificially limited the scope of the scenarios. Some expressed interest in ensuring that a wider, or more inclusive group could be involved in dialogue including face-to-face gatherings and allotting more time for women's problems and ideas to be shared.

Some also identified specific opportunities for possible further collaboration to engage in further dialogue using the scenarios.

Conclusion

While the feedback varied widely two consistent themes seem to emerge: that further dialogue and strategic thinking is needed. This thinking and dialogue is needed to broaden the perspective conveyed through the scenarios and to further activate action for the future of Afghanistan.