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Top Afghan Ministers and international community meet ahead of Kabul Conference

“Afghan priorities for the Afghan people,” will be the focus of the International Conference on Afghanistan – the Kabul Conference, the Afghan Minister of Finance, Dr Omar Zakhilwal has stated.

Dr Omar Zakhilwal was speaking after a meeting of the 14th Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), co-chaired by Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Afghanistan, where Afghanistan’s international donor partners considered detailed presentations by the Government on its national priorities.

The JCMB meeting aimed at preparing the ground for 20 July Kabul Conference, the first major international conference inside Afghanistan.

The purpose of the Kabul Conference is for the Government to set out its priorities and for donor countries to realign their assistance around these programmes to achieve meaningful improvements in the lives of Afghan citizens through the effective delivery of services, the provision of equitable economic opportunities, and the achievement of national stability, and for the international community to back these aims. It is not a conference for new promises or funding pledges. It will give an opportunity for the international community to support Afghan-led priorities including fighting corruption, building up self-reliant Afghan national security forces, and undertaking reconciliation and reintegration activities to reach out to opposition and to encourage combatants to lay down their arms. It follows the London Conference in January, visits to Madrid, Washington and Tokyo, and national outreach activities like the Consultative Peace Jirga to firm-up support for this process.

At the JCMB meeting four main subjects were discussed: economic development (improving job prospects), governance (helping improve delivery of services), security, peace, and reconciliation (follow-through on “Peace Jirga” commitments to reach out to opposition) and regional cooperation (increasing economic, social, and cultural ties with neighbouring countries).

The UN Special Representative Staffan de Mistura welcomed the Afghan Government’s leadership in developing 23 national priority programmes in the areas of governance, social and economic development, and peace and security. “These programmes are evidence of the transition to Afghan responsibility and leadership”.

The Kabul Conference on 20 July will be co-chaired by the Afghan Government and the United Nations. Foreign Ministers and top officials from more than 70 countries are expected to attend.