

**UN Security Council  
18 March 2010**

**Under-Secretary-General  
Alain Le Roy**

Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said that since renewal of UNAMA's mandate a year ago, consensus had been reached on the need to transform the relationship between Afghanistan and its international partners to one that saw greater transition to Afghan responsibility and an increasingly supporting role for the international community. The consensus on that process had emerged clearly at the 28 January Conference in London.

"Now, the tangible shift in that relationship must start," he said. "Concrete steps must be taken by the international community to allow Afghans to be in charge of, and lead, processes, while providing the capacity-building and support required for Afghan institutions to take on this role, including in civilian areas. At the same time, the Afghan Government must concretely demonstrate that it can deliver on the accountability required for a real transition process to be sustainable."

Afghanistan's political calendar was crowded, he said, pointing to the military surge, heightened military tempo, the planned National Assembly elections in September, the upcoming peace jirga announced by President Karzai and the Kabul Conference. There was a risk that the transition could be overtaken by such events. "Our focus must remain firmly on ensuring that 'Afghanization' actually becomes more than the slogan it has been thus far, and that the political calendar before us is premised upon it," he said. That process must formally begin with the Kabul Conference. The United Nations, and UNAMA in particular, was supporting Afghan counterparts in preparing for the Conference. He encouraged the early formal appointment of lead ministries in those preparations. He called for following the strategic path set by the London Conference, which called for greater Afghan ownership.

On 6 March, President Karzai had formally requested that the Secretary-General provide technical and logistic support, as well as help to mobilize donor funding for the National Assembly election, he said. The United Nations and UNAMA stood ready, alongside Afghan electoral institutions and other international partners, to play that role. To ensure the transition to Afghan responsibility, the Independent Election Commission and Electoral Complaints Commission were responsible for ensuring its transparency and integrity, and should perform their mandates effectively, impartially and with the confidence of all Afghan stakeholders. President Karzai had informed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, that he would like the United Nations to nominate the two international members to serve on the Complaints Commission.

The upcoming National Assembly election could be another milestone in highlighting the primacy of constitutional imperative in leading Afghanistan's future, he said. The focus must not only be on the elections, but also on longer-term reform. On the development side, it was important not to lose sight of the continued need to ensure coordination and support for Afghan priorities. Despite progress, sizeable parts of the Afghan territory were still underserved and projects enacted were unsustainable or duplicated what had already been done. Moreover, non-Afghans were still doing what Afghans could be doing. Collective efforts must be geared towards strengthening Afghanistan's capacity to coordinate aid, formulate its own development priorities and receive and disburse funds to finance its greatest needs.

He warned against underestimating the importance of the political process of reconciliation and reintegration. During the London Conference, 70 countries and organizations had shown consensus on the need for such a process. The Afghan Government had agreed to develop a peace and reintegration programme; the international community had agreed to create a peace and reintegration trust fund. UNAMA could bring added value to the programme and management of the fund.

“Clearly, talk about talks has become more than mere talk, and the rhetoric that peace cannot be achieved by military means alone is being complemented by concrete proposals and a clearer policy,” he said. President Karzai’s active engagement with regional players, and the convening in April of the peace jirga, were significant steps. But to ensure success, the process must be followed and coupled with multiple confidence-building measures on both sides, and it must be anchored by embracing the progress achieved since 2002.

He said 2009 had been a difficult year for the United Nations in Afghanistan, but UNAMA had continued courageously to implement its mandate with determination. After the tragic attack against the Bakhtar Guesthouse last October, staff had been relocated, owing to the scarcity of secure accommodation and office space. UNAMA had opened two additional field offices in 2009. By mid-March, all staff previously relocated had been redeployed to Afghanistan. UNAMA was working to reduce the vacancy rate to less than 30 per cent by the summer. That should decrease further by year’s end.

To prevent leadership gaps, Mr. de Mistura had been deployed to Kabul on 13 March, where he had initiated fruitful discussions with President Karzai, other Afghan stakeholders and the international community, Mr. Le Roy said. A new Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs, Martin Kobler, had been appointed. He would deploy in early April.

UNAMA’s work must continue and be reinvigorated wherever necessary, he said. But it must be done in a manner that ensured that programmes and personnel were working on the highest priority matters. He thanked the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for approving a three-month extension of the special hazard pay for Afghanistan. He would continue to seek the support of the Council and relevant budgetary bodies to ensure that staff in non-family duty stations, such as UNAMA, were compensated commensurate with the hardship they faced on the ground.

An unprecedented level of international attention and resources was being invested in Afghanistan to support the Government’s priorities and a transition to greater Afghan responsibility, as endorsed in London, he said. “We must work together and with determination to take advantage of the opportunity to make a difference that this alignment of unity of effort, strategies, priorities and resources presents,” he said.