



Remarks at the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom

[as delivered]

Kabul, 4 April 2016

Thank you co-chair. Ministers, Excellencies, colleagues and friends. As co-chair of the JCMB, let me join the President and Minister Hakimi in welcoming all the participants. We met in this room six months ago to refresh our aid partnership framework. And we called at that time for a frank, candid and constructive dialogue, and I believe that our policy discussions in these past six months have indeed been frank, candid and constructive. An example of which was the President's sharp demand on the UN agencies, funds and programmes to be more transparent in their accounts. I won't respond to that at this stage, this is not the appropriate forum, but of course remind you that you yourself the member states prepare my accounts and review them every year.

Nonetheless, today we aim to continue this dialogue, acknowledging progress but recognizing that Afghanistan continues to face daunting challenges for which it needs, and seeks, international support. That support – especially long-term support, confidence-building support - - remains critical for the stability of the country.

This JCMB will help consolidate the policy dialogue on the Brussels-Warsaw agenda developed over the last months and I am particularly encouraged that our agenda today addresses the link between, on the one hand Warsaw preparations and, on the other, Brussels preparations. Afghanistan needs both security and development, and often we have neglected the interrelated nature of the strategies needed to reach both peace and prosperity. Yet the sustainability of the security strategy is key to the sustainability of our development efforts, and vice versa. Advancing a coherent vision that links the two fora will be crucial in the coming months to make the case that "Afghanistan works".

As I have said previously, the challenge we jointly face is not so much to demonstrate the scale of Afghanistan's needs, as it is to demonstrate that international support and assistance will have a real impact on Afghanistan and its people.

In that regard, it is important to recognize that the Government has made progress on some fundamental issues. It should be congratulated in particular for the increase in revenue collection and for meeting its IMF benchmarks. These are impressive achievements that must be sustained. But even the noteworthy increases in revenues, the Government faces the daunting task of managing security costs while at the same time funding development initiatives

that deliver tangible results to the Afghan people. Critical to the success of this effort will be Government's ability to tackle key challenges that could otherwise undermine both its efforts and the effectiveness of international assistance.

Corruption is one of these challenges affecting the ordinary man and woman, it persistently impedes and erodes the progress that Afghans seek, and that they deserve to see. We welcome Government attention to these issues such as the nomination of the Attorney General and the decree establishing the High Council for Good Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption. These are important steps to provide leadership and oversight to anti-corruption efforts. The Afghan people will be seeking immediate and tangible results. The Government has started articulating a strategy to address the systemic corruption that permeates the security, economic, institutional and political spheres, and progress on this strategy will be essential to building Afghans' confidence in the future of their country.

As we meet today, the economy remains sluggish, with high unemployment. Short term job creation is necessary but not sufficient to remedy the lack of economic confidence. This requires longer term measures to create an enabling environment for investment and for growth and I encourage the Government to focus in the coming months on addressing constraints faced by the private sector and on creating opportunities to unleash its potential. But we must also be realistic in acknowledging the limits of the contribution of the private sector growth. As with the security sector, the Afghan economy will continue to rely on international assistance.

To that end, international partners look forward to engaging with the Government as it prepares a new national development strategy, and we will listen with attention to the initial presentations of those efforts later this morning. This will certainly guide post-2016 development priorities. We must agree to accelerate progress of this work ahead of Brussels, so that we have a plan to ensure that the Afghan people gain the maximum possible benefits from the resources that will be pledged at this conference.

Security, governance and the economy are important, but they are not everything. We must not lose sight of the importance of guaranteeing a just society for all Afghans, where citizens' rights are protected, and where redress is possible. At the moment, uncertainty about the future prevails. Many are looking for a better future outside Afghanistan, and too many are suffering and crying as they do so.

President Ghani rightly emphasizes that state legitimacy rests at the most basic level on the provision of certainty and opportunities, here and now, for all citizens. The Government has put in place building blocks for the future. We acknowledge these efforts and the difficult context in which they were constructed. But at a time when many citizens express doubt about their future, we must assemble those elements, to convince Afghans and their international partners of the relevance of our approach, and confidence in the success that lie ahead.

This understanding, guided by our solid partnership based on the principle of mutual accountability, should inform today's discussions. Thank you.

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