



PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

REMARKS BY NICHOLAS HAYSOM, SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHANISTAN, AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR THE SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

[near-verbatim]

Kabul – Monday, 7 September 2015

It is my privilege to co-chair the senior officials meeting with Minister Eklil Hakimi, Minister of Finance. And I say it is my privilege because I think the meeting that was held was both important and successful.

I say important because I often fear that many citizens of Kabul experience these conferences only as a new source of traffic congestion, whereas, in fact, these conferences, or this one in particular, has as its purpose addressing the aspirations of ordinary Afghans.

The reason it addresses the aspirations of ordinary Afghans is its purpose is to secure in the long term the same levels of international support and aid that we saw committed in Tokyo in 2012. And we are aware that the opportunity for fresh and the renewed commitments will come up in 2016.

But for those renewed commitments to take place there has to be a concrete engagement between Afghanistan and the donor community on the reforms which lie ahead, on the active steps which are taken to implement those reforms and a proper understanding of the needs of Afghanistan and the likelihood of it meeting the challenges ahead.

So it is quite frankly in the context in which there are other conflict situations in the world which are demanding similar levels of aid and assistance. And we at UNAMA see it as our function and we strongly support a call to the international community to keep its focus on Afghanistan and to maintain its levels of assistance given the challenges which lie ahead.

I want to share with you that my own assessment of the conference is that it was a success and in this regard I rely also on the statements that were made by the members of the international community in their statements to the conference.

And that was because this meeting saw an inclusive and honest exchange between members of the international community and not just the leader of the government but the whole of government and independent institutions, and civil society and the private sector. That's an inclusive engagement with Afghanistan.

That gave the international community an opportunity to see that there is in existence a government actively engaged in the process of implementing a comprehensive vision of reform.

There is an honest appreciation of the problems which lie ahead, and the international community noted that the government had inherited challenges and that it was busy in the process of tackling those challenges through a detailed implementation plan.

And that implementation plan was sufficiently detailed and many of the steps have already been taken to commence implementing that programme. And as a result I believe it was a credible presentation of a credible implementation plan by the government of Afghanistan.

Finally, I need to say that these meetings of this kind are not what we call a one way street. They're a two-way street. They involve also an engagement with the donor community, and I think Afghanistan has a right to demand that aid and assistance that comes to Afghanistan has the most significant impact it can have.

So that required the international community to commit to the future to recognize the importance of Afghan leadership in the development project and to accept the need to ensure that its aid followed and was in accordance with the aspirations of all Afghans across the country.

Finally, let me just remark that this is only a beginning of a longer road, that this entire project is concerned to establish a framework in which both donors and the Afghanistan people and their government can mutually assess each other's performance of the difficult year that lies ahead until the Brussels Conference at the end of 2016.

This meeting was a positive pillar, a positive step in that long journey which we'll be making together.

Thank you.
