



**Opening remarks by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan,  
Mr. Tadamichi Yamamoto, at the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Meeting**

**Kabul, Afghanistan, 9 July, 2017**

*[as delivered]*

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Thank you, Co-chair, Ministers, Excellencies, colleagues and friends. I am very pleased to join the President and Minister Hakimi in once again welcoming you to a gathering of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, or JCMB.

We are asked, in these JCMB meetings, to do two things. First, we assess where we are, and what has been achieved. A little over seven months ago, the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan set out a new development and reform agenda. Materials distributed to today's participants give a good picture of the work that has been completed since the conference.

There are serious challenges. But this Government has achieved important, complicated, and challenging reforms. Those achievements deserve recognition, both within and outside this room. The Afghan people need to hear what is working. They should know that for all of the challenges and all of the difficulties, progress is possible. It is more than possible. It is real.

But if we only wanted to catalogue our successes, we wouldn't need a meeting. That brings me to the second thing we are asked to do in this JCMB forum. We must provide strategic and policy guidance to shape the work of our respective institutions.

Ahead of this meeting, Minister Hakimi and I agreed that the JCMB is a rare opportunity to agree on ways to move forward, together. We have decided to try a small experiment today. If we are candid, we have to admit that past gatherings of this forum have been marathons of speech-giving.

Today, we want to do a bit more. Instead of rounds of speeches, we want conversation. We have a big agenda, focused on three critical, and interlinked, themes: transparency, service delivery, and private sector growth. Please cooperate with our excellent moderators as they work to manage this big agenda and help us agree on key priorities.

We will re-convene in the fall. Let us approach today's meeting in the spirit of deciding what we can achieve, what we will achieve, together before we meet again.

As we prepared for today, I have been struck by the level of interest and commitment from Government and international community partners alike. So I believe we will have a lively and useful exchange. But before we tackle specific issues, we should begin with a vision. For that we are deeply honoured to the presence of his Excellency, President Ghani with us today. And so I would like to ask his Excellency, President Ghani to take the floor.

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