



## Ban announces new UN envoy for Afghanistan on eve of London conference

**27 January 2010 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today announced his intention to appoint veteran diplomat Staffan de Mistura as the top United Nations envoy to Afghanistan, as he heads to London for an international conference aimed at helping the country chart its future.**

"Tomorrow's conference on Afghanistan comes at a critical moment," Mr. Ban told reporters at UN Headquarters just before leaving for his trip, which will also include a stop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the African Union summit.

"The Afghan people want a larger say in their future, especially in terms of development. National ownership is essential. At the same time, Afghans need to know that the international community will support them, over the long term, in building their institutions of government."

The conference, which will be co-hosted by the Secretary-General, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, will be followed by another major gathering on Afghanistan to be held in Kabul in a few months.

Tomorrow's meeting aims to establish a strong compact between Mr. Karzai, his Government and his people, and to also set up a strong partnership between the Afghan people and the international community following last year's presidential elections, in which Mr. Karzai won another term as President.

"In London, we expect, first of all, that the international community should give a clear picture to the Afghan Government – how, and in what way, and how much we can support President Karzai in his efforts to bring peace and stability and economic development," Mr. Ban said.

"At the same time, we expect that the new Afghan Government will come out with a strong compact in the area of good governance and how to address corruption, how to enhance human rights."

Mr. de Mistura, a Swedish national who recently served as

the top UN envoy to Iraq, will be tasked with leading the world body's efforts in Afghanistan, taking over on 1 March from Kai Eide of Norway, the current Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA).

"I am grateful for the support from all important stakeholders to this appointment that will help UNAMA extend its role in coordinating the international civilian effort in Afghanistan," said Mr. Ban.

He also cited the need for a more balanced approach in moving forward, stating that "our civilian strategy cannot be an add-on to the military strategy... Balancing the cooperation between the military and civilian areas is very important."

## International support for Afghanistan must go beyond security needs

**28 January 2010 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called for a coherent political strategy to assist Afghanistan in its quest for peace, security and development, noting that the country's challenges cannot be overcome by military efforts alone.**

"We must recognize that while security is a major element in the transition strategy, it must not be the main and only focus," Mr Ban said in his opening remarks to the International Conference on Afghanistan, which he is co-hosting with President Hamid Karzai and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

"We need a coherent political strategy – not as an add-on to the military strategy, but which guides it as part of a balanced civilian and military approach, with peace and reconciliation as an integral component."

Some 70 nations are meeting in London to discuss the way forward in Afghanistan following last year's elections, in which Mr Karzai won another term as President.

"This is an extremely challenging time for Afghanistan and for international engagement in the quest for peace, security and development in the country," noted Mr Ban. "Today's event is a chance to look forward ... to explore how to build on achievements so far.

"It is an opportunity to redefine the relationship between Afghanistan and the international community and its partners ... a relationship based on strengthened Afghan leadership and an increased support role for the international community ... a relationship where international efforts align with the Afghan Government's priorities."

The long road ahead towards recovery and institution-building, he said, must be inclusive, must strengthen governance, respect the human rights and meet the basic needs of the Afghan people. It must also foster an environment conducive to justice and accountability, an environment where corruption cannot thrive.

"We must see corruption for what it is: an assault on the integrity of the state and people's well-being. Afghans have suffered for far too long from a culture of impunity and the lack of rule of law.

"If we are to achieve a stable and secure Afghanistan, these ills must be remedied, starting with improving the electoral process ahead of this year's parliamentary elections," the Secretary-General stated.

He added that despite the increasingly complex security environment, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), together with other UN partners, remains committed – for as long as necessary – to the Afghan people's pursuit of peace and prosperity.

"The United Nations, for its part, will continue to stand with the Afghan people in building peace," he pledged.

Yesterday Mr Ban announced that he will appoint veteran diplomat Staffan de Mistura, a Swedish national who recently served as the top UN envoy to Iraq, to lead the world body's efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr de Mistura will take up his duties on 1 March, replacing Kai Eide of Norway as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA.



## Afghanistan tops agenda in London

**28 January 2010 - The Afghanistan Conference in London takes place today as the international community and the Government of Afghanistan come together for the shared goal of a "stable and secure Afghanistan."**

The major conference is co-hosted by the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai and the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"The London Conference is not just about soliciting more troops and money. We hope the conference will secure the political commitment needed from Afghanistan's international partners to build peace, ensure security and boost development," said UNAMA Spokesperson Aleem Siddique.

Mr Siddique added: "The Afghan Government will lay out its plans to take ownership of these challenges while the international community will look at how support can be better channelled to the Government to empower Afghan leadership and maximize the impact of our support efforts."

When the conference was announced at the end of November last year, Mr Ban said the event would be "a very timely" opportunity to discuss Afghanistan's agenda following the August 2009 elections, adding that the gathering aimed "to establish a strong compact between Mr Karzai, his Government and his people, and to also set up a strong partnership between the Afghan people and the international community."

Prime Minister Brown has said the aim of the conference is to "drive forward our campaign in Afghanistan, to match the increase in military forces with an increased political momentum, to focus the international community on a clear set of priorities across the 43-nation coalition and marshal the maximum international effort to help the Afghan government deliver."

The event is co-chaired by the UN's top envoy for Afghanistan Kai Eide who is also head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and by the UK's Foreign Minister David Miliband and outgoing Afghanistan Foreign Minister Rangin Spanta.

Among those invited to the conference are the foreign ministers of 43 countries whose troop contributions compose the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Also expected at the conference are Afghanistan's immediate neighbours and key regional players; representatives from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, the European Union, and other international organizations such as the World Bank.

The conference ambition "is to deliver and coordinate support to enable President Karzai to meet the ambitions he set out in his inauguration speech." It also "aims to move the international effort forward in three key areas," namely security, governance and development, and regional support.

The conference agenda includes three key areas of security, governance and development, and regional support.

The close is due to issue a communiqué that will include commitments from the Government of Afghanistan to its people for the next 18 months to two years, and the corresponding commitments from the international community in support of the Afghan government's programme.

The communiqué from the London Conference, plus the communiqué to be produced at another conference due to take place in Kabul later this year, "will ensure that momentum for progress in Afghanistan continues."

By Aurora V. Alambra, UNAMA

## Security Council removes five men from UN's Taliban sanctions list

**27 January 2010 - A Security Council committee has removed five men from the United Nations list of those subject to sanctions in connection with Al-Qaida and the Taliban, including a former foreign minister of the ousted Taliban regime in Afghanistan.**

The Security Council's Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, also known as the 1267 committee, approved the deletion (de-listing) of the five individuals on 25 January following a review of the so-called Consolidated List.

The five, who held senior positions during the Taliban regime, are Fazl Mohammad Faizan Qamaruddin, a former deputy minister of commerce; Abdul Hakim Monib Mohammad Nazar, a former deputy minister of frontier affairs; Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil Abdul Ghaffar, former minister of foreign affairs; Shams-Us-Safa Aminzai, a former foreign ministry official; and Mohammad Musa Hottak Abdul Mehdi, former deputy minister of planning.

According to a news release issued by the UN, the five men will no longer be subject to the assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo imposed under resolution 1267 of 1999, and related resolutions, by which all UN Member States are required to impose sanctions on Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and those associated with them.

Last month the Council authorized the creation of an ombudsperson, for an initial period of 18 months, to help deal with the question of removing individuals and entities from the List.

The de-listing comes on the eve of a major international conference on Afghanistan to be held in London on Thursday aimed at helping the country chart the way forward following last year's elections.

# AFGHANISTAN

## THE LONDON CONFERENCE

28 JANUARY 2010



# UNAMA NEWS

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan  
Website: [www.unama.unmissions.org](http://www.unama.unmissions.org)

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## OHCHR/UNAMA Human Rights 2010

**3 February 2010 - Long-standing human rights problems associated with dysfunctional governance, widespread and deeply entrenched impunity, weak justice and law enforcement institutions, coupled with extreme poverty that is exacerbated by marginalization, pose significant challenges to the human rights situation in Afghanistan, both in the immediate and the longer-term.**

**OHCHR/UNAMA HR:** Human rights priorities are defined by a number of considerations, including the priority concerns of Afghans, UN Security Council resolutions, Afghanistan Compact, ANDS (Afghanistan National Development Strategy), the role of different stakeholders, in particular, the AIHRC (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission), and the added value associated with UN human rights interventions. OHCHR/UNAMA HR is focussed on efforts geared to systemic change and, in this context, works closely with a wide range of stakeholders.

OHCHR/UNAMA HR has 85 national and international human rights officers deployed throughout the country both at the regional and provincial level. Human Rights staff monitor, analyze, and report on the human rights situation while simultaneously engaging in protection, capacity-building and advocacy activities.

### Main Activities in the first quarter of 2010:

Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: OHCHR/UNAMA HR provides inputs to annual reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and on the achievements of technical assistance in the field of human rights. The 2009 report is scheduled to be presented to, and considered by, the Human Rights Council in March 2010. The report will highlight concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in Afghanistan, particularly with regard to civilian casualties, due to the escalation and spread of armed conflict. The report will also address conservative and discriminatory practices against women, which are represented by threats against women in public life, the adoption of the Sh'ia Personal Status Law in 2009 and continuing crimes of sexual violence. Limited progress has been made in implementing the Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, and journalists and media workers continue to be harassed for exercising their profession – two issues of critical concern.

**Poverty and Human Rights:** Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. However, the human rights dimension of poverty is rarely a subject of concern in policy circles and most actors see poverty solely in economic terms. Discrimination and exclusion, lack of accountability, non-transparent and unaccountable governance, inequitable resource allocation and abuse of power by State authorities are significant causes of poverty. Thus, it is unrealistic to anticipate that chronic and deep-rooted poverty can be addressed effectively in the absence of attention to the human rights dimension of extreme poverty. OHCHR/UNAMA HR is scheduled to release a report "Wilful Neglect: The Human Rights Dimension of Poverty" on 18 February 2010. Other initiatives include to mainstream human rights into development work, particularly in the UNDAF context, and capacity-building of the AIHRC in regard to their analysis on progress of the realization of economic and social rights.

**Violence against Women:** As a follow-up to last year's report "Silence is Violence: Stop the Abuse of Afghan Women and Girls", OHCHR/UNAMA HR is set to conduct research on harmful traditional practices such as baad and forced marriage – an analysis of legislation that outlaws or indirectly supports such practices will also be carried out; field-based officers will start undertaking research to identify the extent of the problem and its

drivers around the International Women's Day (8 March) – this research will inform advocacy strategies and findings will be published in the form of a short report.

**Protection of Civilians:** The intensification and spread of the armed conflict continue to take a heavy toll on civilians. OHCHR/UNAMA HR undertakes a range of activities aimed at minimizing the impact of the conflict on civilians; including independent and impartial monitoring and investigation of incidents and analysis of trend in which loss of life occurs.

**Conflict-Related Detention:** The status of persons detained by international military forces is a major concern. OHCHR/UNAMA HR continues to investigate and monitor the situation, in particular the development of a possible transfer of persons detained in U.S. Bagram Theater Internment Facility and implement its advocacy strategy on due process and other procedural guarantees for detainees.

By Norah Niland, UNAMA Human Rights Chief

## Attacks halt UN food agency's deliveries in north-western Afghanistan

**2 February 2010 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has temporarily suspended deliveries in north-western Afghanistan after a convoy was attacked over the weekend, resulting in the loss of over 100 metric tons of food.**

A 19-truck convoy was stopped for the night in the Sang Atash area of Badghis province on 30 January when it was attacked.

Seven vehicles and the food supplies they were carrying were destroyed, while two other vehicles were damaged, although some of the food they were transporting was salvaged.

Challiss McDonough, WFP public information officer for Afghanistan, said that one truck driver is being treated for injuries, while one driver and his truck are currently unaccounted for.

The agency, she said, has temporarily halted food deliveries to the area while the security situation is being evaluated.

"WFP calls on all parties in Afghanistan to allow safe passage of vital food assistance intended to support the neediest Afghans," Ms. McDonough said.

The agency has been working continuously in the country since 1963 and is active in all 34 of its provinces. It has identified insecurity, drought, floods and low education levels as being among the factors exacerbating food insecurity in Afghanistan.



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## MACCA director urges more funds to speed up demining process

**2 February 2010 - The programme director of the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) has urged more funding for the demining process in Afghanistan to fill a funding shortfall of US\$ 163 million.**

MACCA Programme Director Dr Haider Reza said MACCA now faces a funding shortfall for mine clearance of US\$ 163 million against the funding target of US\$ 242 million for mine action programmes in 2010.

Dr Reza added that because of the funding shortfall, the Afghan Compact benchmark of clearing 293 square kilometres of contaminated land in 2010 may not be met.

Under the Afghanistan Compact and the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan committed to reduce the area contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war by 70 per cent by the beginning of March 2011, and achieve total mine clearance by the beginning of March 2013.

"Now looking at these two benchmarks, I can already now say that Afghanistan will be forced to ask for extension," said Dr Reza.

"Simply because of different reasons, one is funding at the very top, if we have enough fund, we can do much more, and second, there are other reasons, for example the security," he added, pointing out that "if required funding flows to the programme, 157 sq km of contaminated land can be removed in 2010."

Dr Reza also stressed that mine action has done "a tremendous job" in the country. During the 20 past years, Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has cleared over 15,000 hazard areas throughout the country; and 84 districts and 1,370 communities have been declared free of mines and other explosive remnants of war.

Based on the Integrated Operational Framework for 2010 released by MACCA, the MAPA will concentrate its effort in areas where – from the humanitarian perspective – there is a need, including diminishing the number of victims of mine explosions and explosive remnants of war.

The average number of mine victims per month now is only about 40, lower than one quarter of the number of victims per month in 2001.

"The good thing about the MAPA is that with the workforce of around 10,000 people, there is potential in the capacity to expand the programme in a realistic and logical way, provided there is a funding."

"And another very important portion of our work or the mine action activities is the mine-risk education and victim assistance," he added.

In 2009, 280 communities across Afghanistan were declared impact-free.

Last year, some 51,743 anti-personnel mines, 1,152,738 explosive remnants of war and 746 anti-tank mines were destroyed by clearing or cancelling 1,229 minefields and 121 battle areas; and 430,989 women and girls, and 655,018 men and boys received mine-risk education courses across Afghanistan.

By Kangying Guo, UNAMA



## Community-based demining works

**1 February 2010 - Farmers and villagers from twelve locations across Afghanistan have been taking part in demining projects to secure the lives of their families and communities.**

Mines have long been a threat to Afghans. Figures from the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan show 481 people were killed or injured in incidents related to mines or explosive remnants of war during 2009.

Some 322 males were injured and 93 killed and 51 females were injured and 15 killed.

With assistance from partners, local people are recruited and trained as deminers to clear the mines in their own communities, mainly in volatile areas.

This community-based demining is operational in Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Ghor, Kandahar and Bamyan provinces.

From October 2008 to February 2010, seven out of 11 hazards or 81 per cent of 875,503 square metres have been cleared, leading to the destruction of 114 anti-personnel mines and 2,559 other explosive remnants of war in one district of Kunar where 2,400 families live.

It has also become a major source of income for many people.

"Before this I was working as farmer, it was hard work and I could only make a little money. Now, working as a deminer, I have a good salary and the work is rewarding," one of the deminers from Spena Kalacha village of Kandahar said.

"I think it is good that we demine our own communities since we know where the minefields are better than anyone and it is good that the programme has created jobs for us," he added.

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) says that a high-level of community liaison is vital to ensuring the security of these projects.

The 2009 report from MAPA shows that 280 communities across Afghanistan were declared free from mines between January to December 2009.

A total of 51,743 anti-personnel mines, 1,152,738 explosive remnants of war and 746 anti-tank mines were destroyed last year.

Some 430,989 women and girls and 655,018 men and boys received mine risk education courses across Afghanistan.

Mine action efforts in Afghanistan have been active since 1988 and some 15,000 hazardous areas have been cleared throughout the country over this period.

By Kangying Guo, UNAMA



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## More than five million labour days for the poor in 2010

**31 January 2010 - Taking a labour based approach to the projects it helps manage for donors and the Afghan Government, UNOPS will help its partners create 20,000 thousand jobs for the poor in Afghanistan in 2010.**

Ask Afghans what they see as the biggest challenge facing Afghanistan right now and the lack of sustainable livelihoods comes at the top of the list. In a country where 42 percent of the population is estimated to live in poverty this comes as no surprise.

Without income generating activities Afghan households are incapable of improving their situation and building stronger communities, more resistant to economic ups and downs.

As unemployment rates rise across the world, many people are finding it difficult to properly provide for their families. Yet, for far too long this has been the order of the day in Afghanistan, where 39 percent of the population goes hungry.

As a result, creating sustainable livelihoods and employment for the poor is one of the key priorities of both the Afghan Government and the international donor community.

Since 2002, UNOPS and its partners together with the Afghan Government have helped create more than 12 million labour days through the National Rural Access Program (NRAP) alone generating vital income for close to 50,000 families throughout all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

In addition, through its major focus on infrastructure projects UNOPS has helped improve access for millions of Afghans to basic social services such as health and education as well as to local markets.

During 2010, UNOPS will continue to work with the international donor community and the Afghan Government on development projects which generate employment. Close to 20,000 households and their members will be provided with income generating activities helping at least 80,000 people to better lives.

In Saripul and Samangan provinces alone, UNOPS will support the Swedish Agency for International Development Assistance (SIDA) generate an estimated 250,000 labour days on the continued rehabilitation of roads.

UNOPS will also provide valuable support to the implementation of the Government of Afghanistan's nationwide road rehabilitation program the National Rural Access Program (NRAP) funded by the World Bank and the Trust Fund for Afghanistan. 2010 will see the generation of an impressive five million labour days for local Afghans all over the country.

And there are many other employment generating infrastructure projects going on in 2010. In Kandahar, UNOPS will work with the Japanese Government; in Bamyan UNOPS will continue to work with the Italian Government; and in Faryab UNOPS will work on road construction with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The highly successful Afghanistan Conservation Corps program funded by the Government of the United States of America and implemented together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, which has generated 400,000 working days for Afghans since 2003, will also continue in 2010 to enhance sustainable livelihoods through its labour based environmental rehabilitation of natural resources.

Creating employment for the Afghan people is a high priority for the international community. Thus, in projects where UNOPS is involved we aim to take a labour based approach where the ratio between heavy machinery and workers provides high levels of employment generation for the local communities while ensuring a high quality of delivered outputs.

Furthermore, in a country with weak local contractors UNOPS and its partners prioritize work with the local communities as they can provide the same (or better) quality of works while creating a greater sense of ownership for the results.

Proper transfer of knowledge and capacity building are keys to sustainable employment. This year, UNOPS will continue to work on the World Bank funded customs modernization project in partnership with the Ministry of Finance on strengthening the capacity of the Afghanistan Customs Department. UNOPS and the Government of Italy will also work with the Afghan National Disaster Management Facility to enhance the country's capacity to respond to natural disasters in the Western provinces.

In 2010, UNOPS will continue to work hard supporting its partners deliver tangible development results for Afghanistan while focusing on the inclusion of the Afghan people and the further creation of sustainable employment. We will work with the Afghan people to help them rebuild their country.

By Bruce McCarron, UNOPS Country Director





## IMF and World Bank Announce US\$1.6 Billion in Debt Relief to Afghanistan

**28 January 2010 - The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to support US\$1.6 billion in debt relief for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.**

The Boards of Directors of both institutions agreed that the country has taken the necessary steps to reach the completion point under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Afghanistan becomes the 27th country to reach the completion point under the Initiative. This will generate total debt service savings of US\$1.6 billion, which include US\$1.3 billion from the HIPC Initiative, US\$260 million from Paris Club creditors beyond HIPC, and US\$38.4 million from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

To reach the completion point, Afghanistan carried out a number of important reforms despite an extremely challenging environment characterized by insecurity, a food crisis, and a difficult political situation. These reforms included actions to begin implementing Afghanistan's National Development Strategy (ANDS), maintain a stable macroeconomic environment, and enhance debt management.

In addition, the authorities have made progress in public financial management, mining sector reforms, and transparency and accountability in health and education services. Based on strong commitments going forward, the Government of Afghanistan was granted waivers for two completion point triggers on pension reform for public employees and the military, and the restructuring of four key service delivery ministries, both of which had been substantially implemented. Reforms under the HIPC Initiative are expected to mobilize additional resources and support the country's reconstruction and poverty reduction, helping to place it on a sustainable path.

"The Afghan government has demonstrated a very strong commitment to an ambitious reform program since it reached its HIPC decision point in 2007," said Nicholas J. Krafft, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan. "This is a very commendable achievement given the deteriorating security situation and political uncertainty over the recent election year. On a cautionary note, even after HIPC debt relief Afghanistan will remain a country under high risks of debt distress due its reliance on donor funding."

"The authorities should be commended for their efforts amid a very difficult environment," said Enrique Gelbard, the IMF mission chief for Afghanistan. "Alongside improvements in security, the key challenges going forward will be to raise domestic revenues, invest in infrastructure, and press ahead with the implementation of the ANDS to reduce poverty. This will require significant efforts by the authorities as well as substantial and sustained support from donors and multilateral institutions."

Debt relief under the HIPC Initiative from all of Afghanistan's creditors amounts to US\$582.4 million in net present value (NPV) terms[1]. All multilateral and Paris Club creditors, as well as some other official creditors have agreed to participate. Afghanistan is expected to receive the equivalent of US\$1.3 billion of debt relief in nominal terms under the HIPC Initiative. In addition, Paris Club Creditors have also indicated that they would provide assistance beyond HIPC relief through 100 percent stock-of-debt cancellation, estimated at about US\$260 million in nominal terms.

Upon reaching the completion point, Afghanistan also qualifies for debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

MDRI relief will lead to a nominal reduction of debt to IDA by US\$35 million. Afghanistan does not have any MDRI eligible debt outstanding to the IMF.

The completion point marks the end of a process that included clearance of arrears and debt reductions by Paris Club creditors since 1996 and will ultimately result in a 96 percent reduction of Afghanistan's external debt, equivalent to US\$11 billion in NPV terms.[2]

### Annex (Note to Editors)

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. Per capita income is estimated to have been about US\$425 in 2008, and Afghanistan ranks well behind its neighbors on most human development indicators. However, there has been progress in recent years toward Afghanistan's political, economic, and social transformation. Performance under the ongoing arrangement supported by the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility has been satisfactory, and the country has implemented substantial reforms on key areas identified at the time of the decision point under the HIPC initiative in 2007. This facilitated a progressive regularization of relations with creditors through a Paris Club rescheduling agreement in July 2007 and the approval of the ANDS in 2008.

### The HIPC Initiative

In 1996, the World Bank and IMF launched the HIPC Initiative to create a framework in which all creditors, including multilateral creditors, can provide debt relief to the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries, and thereby reduce the constraints on economic growth and poverty reduction imposed by the debt burdens in these countries. The Initiative was modified in 1999 to provide three key enhancements:

- **Deeper and Broader Relief.** External debt thresholds were lowered from the original framework. As a result, more countries have become eligible for debt relief and some countries have become eligible for greater relief;
- **Faster Relief.** A number of creditors began to provide interim debt relief immediately at the "decision point." Also, the new framework permitted countries to reach the "completion point" faster; and
- **Stronger Link between Debt Relief and Poverty Reduction.** Freed resources were to be used to support poverty reduction strategies developed by national governments through a broad consultative process.

To date, 35 HIPC countries have reached their decision points, of which 27 (including Afghanistan) have reached completion point.

### The MDRI

At the July 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, G8 leaders pledged to cancel the debt of the world's most indebted countries, most of which are located in Africa. The aim of this Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) was to reduce further the debt of HIPCs and provide additional resource to help them reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDRI is separate from the HIPC Initiative but linked to it operationally. Under the MDRI, three multilateral institutions – the World Bank's International Development Association, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Fund provide 100 percent debt relief on eligible debts to countries having reached the HIPC completion point.[3] Unlike the HIPC Initiative, the MDRI is not comprehensive in its creditor coverage. It does not involve participation of official bilateral or commercial creditors, or of multilateral institutions other than the above-mentioned three.

For more information on the World Bank's work in Afghanistan:  
<http://www.worldbank.org.af>

[1] Net present value of debt is the discounted sum of all future debt service obligations (interest and principal).

[2] In March 2006, Afghanistan's debt was equivalent to US\$11.6 billion in net present value terms. In June 2006, Paris Club creditors provided a debt relief through a flow treatment under Naples terms, including an up-front 80 percent discount on Russian debt disbursed before 1992.

[3] The IMF also provided MDRI debt relief to non-HIPCs whose income per capita is below US\$380 in order to ensure uniformity of treatment in the use of IMF resources.