



KABUL CONFERENCE: President Karzai, Secretary-General Ban open historic meeting

President Karzai's address is posted on his [official website](#).

Kabul, 20 July 2010

Your Excellency President Karzai,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Six months ago, in London, we promised to meet again in Kabul.

And so, today, we are gathered here on this auspicious occasion the first international conference on Afghanistan to be held in Afghanistan, organized by the Afghan Government for the Afghan people.

President Karzai, we thank you for your hospitality and your leadership. Thank you for your very hard work in making this day happen.

Please be assured: we recognize that the journey from London to Kabul is measured in more than miles.

It is measured in the progress that you have made in delivering on the London Commitments.

In London, we redefined the relationship between Afghanistan and its international partners.

In effect, we forged a new compact a compact that builds on the lessons we all learned from the past.

Henceforth, Afghans would increasingly take the lead in shaping their future.

Embracing its own destiny, the Afghan government would take essential steps to deliver on the needs of its people.
And that is precisely what has begun to happen.

Slowly but greatly, surely, the government has expanded its capacity and scope of governance.

It has spelled out what it intends for the future and how it intends to get there.

With this conference, we mark the true beginning of a very fundamental transition.

Excellencies,

I would like to take this opportunity to address a few words directly to the people of Afghanistan, who are listening through radio or television or who may read what we say today in newspapers tomorrow.

To the Afghan people I say:

We here today share your aspirations and we understand your frustrations.

We are aware that, with the best of intentions, the government and its international partners have sometimes sought to achieve peace, security and development without sufficient engagement of the Afghan people.

At times, we have shown insufficient consideration for Afghan culture and history.

The Kabul Process, upon which we embark today, is intended to do better.

The government has taken the lead in designing programmes that the international community will support.

These plans aim to deliver real results for you, the Afghan people, without delay.

They aim to establish effective democratic governance and guarantee your rights and the rule of law.

Yet these programmes cannot succeed without your support – without all of you, acting in good faith.

That is why, today, we appeal to the Afghan people to come together to achieve peace through reconciliation to achieve justice through mutual respect to build a future based on economic development and mutual cooperation with full respect for your nation's sovereignty.

This is my message to the Afghan people: to unite in the national interest.

You have suffered much, for too long.

The United Nations and I personally will do all we can to help build a brighter future for you and your children.

UNAMA NEWS

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
Website: <http://unama.unmissions.org>

Compiled by:
Strategic Communication and Spokespersons Unit
Kabul, Afghanistan

15 - 22 July 2010



Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers,

The Afghan people wish us well at this conference. But they will base their judgments on our actions, not our words.

This conference is not meant to review or revise our strategies.

We are here to support the Afghan government and its new priorities to reaffirm our pledge to stay engaged for the long term.

This gathering marks a milestone in a journey begun in Paris in 2008, with the Afghan National Development Strategy.

We continued along our road with meetings in Moscow, The Hague and, more recently, in London.

Today, Afghanistan's government is becoming a full and increasingly effective partner.

Afghan ministers have met important short-term commitments.

They have set up effective consultation structures.

They have devised programmes which, with international support and Afghan resolve, can bring tangible change into the lives of ordinary Afghans: improved security, better standards of living, and an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue, stronger regional cooperation can complement domestic result.

In this regard, we welcome sincerely the recently concluded Afghanistan and Pakistan trade and transit agreement which is a very promising example.

And they have done all this in a short time, amid a dense political calendar that has included electoral preparations and the Peace Jirga.

I commend President Karzai and his cabinet for this achievement.

As we move ahead, security will be crucial.

Let no one think that we are closing our eyes to the challenge.

But these are programmes that can be implemented now, despite the security challenges.

Neither should anyone interpret our efforts to pass responsibility to the Afghan government as a sign of diminishing international resolve.

Yet let us also be clear: just as Afghans are taking greater responsibility for governance and development, so must they take greater responsibility for security as well.

This was our goal nine years ago; it remains our goal now. Afghanistan must take that decisive step towards guaranteeing its own sovereignty.

The government has prepared several important documents on the security situation, including the National Security Policy and the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme.

It has designed a strategy for the transfer of lead responsibility on a province-by-province basis, according to clearly defined conditions.

The Ministry of Interior has carried out important institutional reforms.

The Afghan National Army and National Police continue to receive essential training.

These efforts must continue – with international support.

Today's conference is also an opportunity to highlight the grave situation of Afghan civilians affected by the conflict.

We continue to see a rise in indiscriminate, disproportionate and deliberate attacks by anti-government elements against civilians and government representatives.

Too many Afghans see their basic human rights violated again and again.

Improving security for Afghans is not just a matter of physical protection. It also requires accountability for serious violations of human rights – those happening now and those that took place in the past.

And of course, Afghanistan will not achieve peace, development and human rights without the full participation of women.

Excellencies,

Let me close by expressing my profound gratitude to all the international community members for providing military assistance [inaudible] at a great sacrifice and also providing financial and economic support to Afghan people.

And I would like to take this opportunity again to express my profound gratitude to our Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, and his UN staff for their

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outstanding work.

Their exceptional commitment, and exceptional bravery, is an eloquent testament to all that is at stake.

I assure you Mr. President that the United Nations will work and deliver as one United Nations. And thank you for giving us for this opportunity to work together with you.

Let me assure you that we will be working closely with Finance Minister Zakhilwal, the Afghan government and other partners as we move ahead.

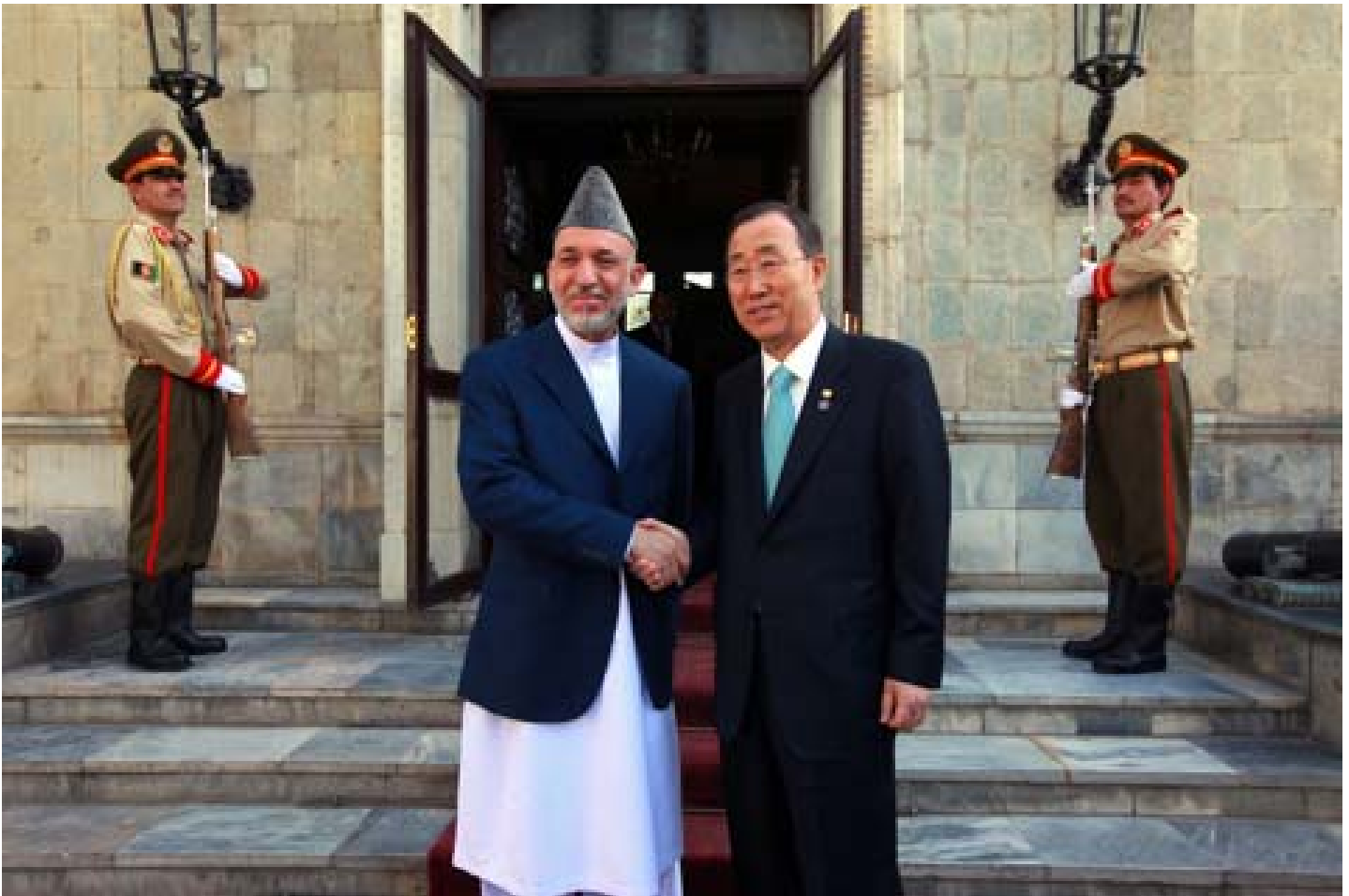
We need to develop concrete mechanisms for helping the government to implement its ambitious programmes.

We need to assure that aid and development programmes are well-coordinated fully transparent and comply with the seven principles of good-donorship that we will discuss today.

We cannot overstate the importance of this mission.

In fulfilling it, I look forward to working closely with all of you confident that the measure of our success will be our deeds, not our good intentions.

Thank you very much.



UNAMA

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan



KABUL CONFERENCE: an Afghan vision for the future

20 July 2010 - Delegations from 70 countries gathered in Afghanistan today unanimously agreed on an Afghan-led political framework for peace and reconciliation and a way forward that includes realignment of international aid behind national priorities, announced President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan at the conclusion of the Kabul Conference.

"What we have achieved is of tremendous importance," United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who co-chaired the conference, said in his closing remarks.

"Never before have we had a more concrete vision of Afghanistan's future. Moreover, this vision was created by the Afghan Government. It has been developed with the Afghan people," he added.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General said Afghanistan was on the brink of "a very fundamental transition" and acknowledged that Afghans have not been adequately included in the decision making in the past.

"The government and its international partners have sometimes sought to achieve peace, security and development without sufficient engagement of the Afghan people," Mr Ban said, addressing the people of Afghanistan directly through the hundreds of journalists gathered at the conference.

"The Kabul Process, upon which we embark today, is intended to do better," he stressed.

Mr Ban appealed to the Afghan people to unite for the good of the country, and urged them to achieve peace through reconciliation.

In his keynote address this morning, Mr Karzai called on opposition groups to give up militancy and join the peace process.

Making a reference to the Peace Jirga last month, he said "we must reach out to those of our armed opponents who will be willing to accept our constitution and renounce ties to al-Qaeda's network of terror" and should be done with the expectation that international partners would endorse and support such peace initiatives.

At the same time, Mr Karzai noted that the international community was battling "our common enemies" and asked them to focus on the possibility of a peaceful, prosperous and stable Afghanistan."

In his speech, President Karzai called on the international community to focus less on short-term, isolated projects that do not "generate the desired results, achieve public visibility, or support the establishment of good governance."

Instead, he urged international partners to concentrate their efforts on specific national programmes and projects "to transform the lives of our people, reinforce the social compact between state and citizens."

The President laid out a series of priorities for the international community, which included channeling a greater percentage of international aid through the national budget rather than spending the funds on side projects.

He also urged the international community to support the creation of agricultural value chains that could economically outperform poppy production.

Stressing the need to take control of the security situation, Mr Karzai said Afghan National Security Forces would be responsible for all military and law enforcement operations throughout the country by 2014.

He also pledged to tackle corruption and abuse warning that those who violate the law will be punished even within his own Government.

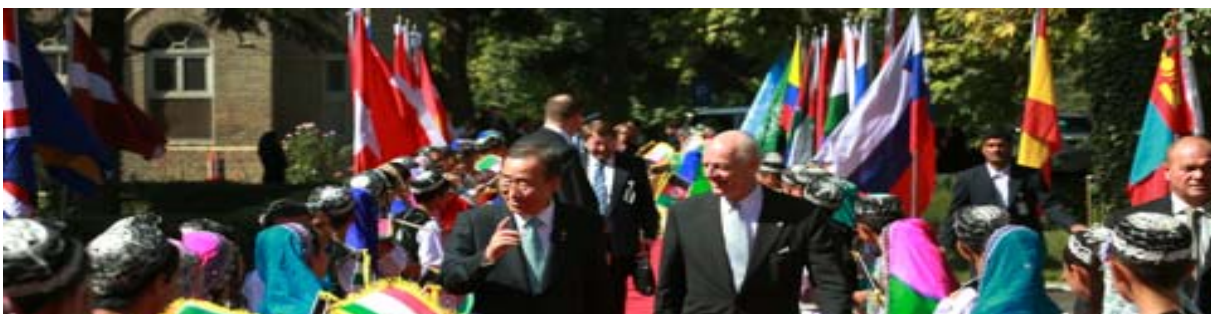
In addition, all civilian and military contracts awarded to international partners would be disclosed in the spirit of transparency.

Following the keynote addresses, each of the 70 delegations had an opportunity to make a statement.

Mr Ban met with many of the leaders in bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the main event.

Kabul Conference participants adopted a ten-page Communiqué setting out the commitments for action which form part of what is known as the "Kabul process."

By UNAMA



KABUL CONFERENCE: Ban urges full support for Afghan peace and development efforts

20 July 2010 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today voiced support for the priorities laid out by the Afghan Government to advance peace and development and called on the country's men and women to rally around these efforts, as he opened a major international conference in the capital, Kabul.

"We are here to support the Afghan Government and its new priorities ... to reaffirm our pledge to stay engaged for the long term," Mr. Ban told participants at the Kabul Conference, the first international gathering on Afghanistan to be held in the country.

While the Government has begun to take essential steps to deliver on the needs of its people, it needs the full backing of the country's citizens, he said.

"These plans aim to deliver real results for you, the Afghan people, without delay. They aim to establish effective democratic governance ... and guarantee your rights and the rule of law.

"Yet these programmes cannot succeed without your support – without all of you, acting in good faith," he added.

"That is why, today, we appeal to the Afghan people to come together ... to come together to achieve peace through reconciliation ... to achieve justice through mutual respect ... to build a future based on economic development and mutual cooperation ... with full respect for your nation's sovereignty.

"This is my message to the Afghan people: to unite in the national interest," said Mr. Ban.

The conference, co-chaired by the Secretary-General and President Hamid Karzai, builds on previous international meetings between Afghanistan and its international partners, most recently the London Conference held in January.

It was in London that the Government and its international partners jointly endorsed a strategy of transition to greater Afghan responsibility for the affairs of the country.

The Secretary-General said that today, the Afghan Government is becoming "a full and increasingly effective partner," having met important short-term commitments and set up effective consultation structures.

The Government has also devised programmes which, with international support and Afghan resolve, can bring tangible change into the lives of ordinary Afghans – improved security, better standards of living, and an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue.

At the same time, he stated that security will be a crucial issue in moving ahead. "Let no one think that we are closing our eyes to the challenge. But these are programmes that can be implemented now, despite the security challenges.

"Neither should anyone interpret our efforts to pass responsibility to the Afghan government as a sign of diminishing international resolve.

"Yet let us also be clear: just as Afghans are taking greater responsibility for governance and development, so must they take greater responsibility for security as well... Afghanistan must take that decisive step towards guaranteeing its own sovereignty."

The UN chief also used the opportunity presented by the conference to highlight the "grave" situation of Afghan civilians affected by the conflict, noting a rise in indiscriminate, disproportionate and deliberate attacks by anti-government elements against civilians and government representatives.

"Too many Afghans see their basic human rights violated again and again," he said. "Improving security for Afghans is not just a matter of physical protection. It also requires accountability for serious violations of human rights – those happening now and those that took place in the past.

"And of course, Afghanistan will not achieve peace, development and human rights without the full participation of women," he added.

Top officials from over 70 countries, as well as international and regional organizations and financial institutions, attended today's meeting, which concluded with the adoption of a communiqué setting out the commitments for action that form part of what is known as the "Kabul process."

At the end of the day-long event, Mr. Ban said that what was achieved today is of tremendous importance. "Never before have we had a more concrete vision of Afghanistan's future," he noted. "Moreover, this vision was created by the Afghan Government. It has been developed with the Afghan people."

By UN News Centre





KABUL CONFERENCE: Closing statement of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

20 July 2010 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's closing remarks to Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the international community gathered at the Kabul Conference, as delivered, appear below.

President [Hamid] Karzai,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your commitment and very perceptive discussions today that took place for the future of Afghanistan.

And I also would like to express on behalf of all of us our deepest appreciation and admiration for the leadership of President Karzai. And for the hospitality that went out to all of us. Thank you very much.

Today's discussion was so rich, detailed and comprehensive that it is hard to summarize it.

Let me just say that we have agreed on a communiqué that highlights both the essential points of our deliberations and the very specific commitments we have made.

What we have achieved is of tremendous importance.

Never before have we had a more concrete vision of Afghanistan's future.

Moreover, this vision was created by the Afghan Government.

It has been developed with the Afghan people.

It is based on a new compact between the Government and the country's people.

And it has been endorsed by the international community, reflecting our determination to stay engaged for the long term, align our activities behind Afghan priorities, and do our part to enable stability and development to take hold in this country.

Now we must focus all our energies on making this vision a reality.

Certainly, we have challenged ourselves by setting out specific, measurable commitments. Those commitments are the criteria against which we will be judged, and by which we should judge ourselves. Accepting that judgment is the essence of accountable government and effective aid.

The people of Afghanistan expect us to rise to this challenge. So do the people of each of the other countries represented at this table. We must not disappoint them.

Finally, let me express my gratitude to the Afghan Government. First, for its hospitality again today. Second, for the hard work it has done on its programmes for the future.

With the planning now done, implementation lies ahead. The Kabul conference may be ending today, but the Kabul Process continues. It continues with our full support, and with our expectations of returning one day to this historic city and to a more prosperous and stable Afghanistan.

Let me just add my personal observation and reflection on my experiences of Kabul. When I was just a secretary in the Korean foreign ministry, I was covering Afghanistan and working on this area and India. I used to come here. I was so impressed with this beautiful building. The whole city was very secure and I was able to walk around and eat a kabob in the market without any fear of security.

Now after 37 years or so, coming to this building, this is my first time after that, after I had left and I just got the office of foreign minister, where I went today with my ambassador to establish diplomatic relationships.

That was my personal reflection, and I really hope that when I come back again, we will really be able to see this city secure and prosperous and people can walk around freely without any threat of security. And this is my own personal statement. Thank you very much for listening to my own personal reflections.

I have a special attachment to you and to your people and thank you very much for your leadership.

Thank you.

Bamyan Buddhas illuminated with message of peace for Kabul Conference

21 July 2010 - Afghan youth peace volunteer groups illuminated the site of the renowned Bamyan Buddhas with the word "Sulh," which means peace in Dari, to send a message of peace to the world on the occasion of Kabul Conference.

"We have come together tonight to light up the great Buddhas of Bamyan to welcome participants of the Kabul Conference in Afghanistan and to send our messages for peace to them" said Mohammad Jan, an 11th grade student and a member of the Bamyan Peace Volunteers in Bamyan Province, west of Kabul.

At the Kabul Conference, co-chaired by the United Nations, the Government of Afghanistan asked the international community to realign its pledged aid and programmes behind a set of national priorities which focus on improving daily lives of Afghans.

The national agenda is part of an Afghan-led political framework for reconciliation and peace.

In their own way, the youth volunteers in Bamyan are contributing to the long-term goal of a secure Afghanistan.

"Fighting cannot bring peace is the message we want to send to our Afghan country men and women, and to the world. As we say in Afghanistan: blood can not wash away blood," added Mohammad.

In the spirit of peace, the youth group recently sent peace souvenirs to the youth groups in Kandahar to establish closer relationships with youth in difficult provinces of Afghanistan, said Mohammad.

Throughout the year, the volunteers campaign for peace with sister groups in other provinces and abroad, with volunteers in United States, Iraq, Palestine and Israel.

"Our message is very simple to understand: Why not love, why not peace," said Mohammad Jan.

By Jaffar Rahim, UNAMA



Voices from Jalalabad on the Kabul Conference

19 July 2010 - People in Afghanistan's eastern region hope that tomorrow's Kabul Conference will conclude with positive steps towards bringing sustainable peace and economic development to their country.

Most of the more than dozen people United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) interviewed in the eastern city of Jalalabad said they are craving stability and that any conference of international stature should give serious thought to peace, even if it means bringing onboard "previously ignored groups."

Another issue that should be at the forefront of the Conference - to be hosted by the Government of Afghanistan and to be co-chaired by the United Nations - is corruption control, they said.

"I think the Conference will be very successful if the decision makers consider all the aspects and problems of our society including corruption," said Dr Qiamudin, a medical doctor.

He said that he thinks the Government of Afghanistan and the international community will be successful if all national actors are given "a fair chance."

"Previous conferences were not very successful because some groups were ignored," said Qiamudin.

Around 40 foreign ministers are expected to attend the one-day conference, with further deputy foreign ministers and heads of multilateral organizations such as NATO and the European Union. Representatives of civil society will also participate.

At the conference, the Government of Afghanistan will present national priorities and programmes that will give the Afghans increasingly more control over security and development within their country.

Prem Singh, who belongs to the minority Sikh community in Jalalabad, said he has been following the Kabul Conference in the media.

"It will help us in fostering peace and economic growth," he said. But not everyone thinks the same way as Qiamudin and Singh.

Abdul Wajid, who owns a cellphone shop in downtown Jalalabad, said the Conference should generate economic resources to Afghanistan and that the Government "should construct hydro-power stations."

Wiqar Ahmad, who came to buy a cellphone at Wajid's shop, said that although he does not know much about the Conference, the country's first priority should be the construction of large and small factories.

Qari Enayatullah Sahak, a pharmacist, thinks the country's first priority should be to strengthen its industries.

Mirwais, who repairs cellphones, said the lives of many Afghans have been improved in the last eight years and hopes that this conference "will bring positive changes."

Meanwhile, people like Basira, a member of the Afghan National Police, and schoolteacher Sana Sadaat, said they had not heard anything about a Conference taking place in Kabul, despite it being the first Afghan-focused conference to be held in the country and the biggest in at least four decades.

Taj Mohammad, who works at the Social Affairs Department, knows that neighbouring countries are sending representatives and thinks that the Conference will bring some positive outcomes.

"If you look at our history, you will see two things - religion and conferences in the form of Jirga (assembly). We believe in them," said Mohammad.

However, Ismail Safi, who works at the Department of Justice in neighbouring Kunar province, is sceptical about the outcomes of the Conference.

"There were a lot of conferences, the London Conference being the last one. Still, there is no positive change on the ground. So I have doubts this time too," he said.

By Shafiqullah Waak and Tilak Pokharel, UNAMA



Afghan women call for inclusion in decision-making ahead of Kabul Conference

18 July 2010 - Dozens of Afghan women from the provinces of Kandahar in the south to Takhar in the north are calling on Afghan leaders to give more visibility to women's rights at the Kabul Conference on Tuesday, cautioning that unless more is done to include women in the national decision making, the progress towards women's empowerment made in the past decade will be lost.

"We, the women from difference provinces, have come together to solidify our voices at the capital of the country," civil society representatives wrote in a statement today following the two-day civil society conference in Kabul entitled Afghan Women's Movement from First Women's Council to Kabul Conference.

"Considering women's unique experience of the war and deprivation, yet emerging as survivors, women's potential and experience should be capitalized in the peace building effort," the delegates wrote in the statement.

The agenda for the women's movement conference focused on follow up to the recommendations made last month in the National Consultative Peace Jirga, where Afghan women were for the first time able to sit with an overwhelmingly male-dominated elite comprised of traditional elders, religious leaders and former warlords.

At the Jirga, recommendations were made to actively include women in all sections of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Plan, with the understanding that "women's rights and achievements should not be compromised in any peace negotiations or accords."

In today's statement, the delegates stressed that while they "appreciate the support" of the Afghan Government and the international community over the past eight years, as seen in documents such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the Afghan Constitution of 2004 and the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA), their goal is to "bring a joint and collective voice of Afghan women" to the Afghan-led Kabul Conference.

The statement includes recommendations in the five key governance clusters – agriculture and rural development, human resource development, economic and infrastructure development, security and governance – which the delegates said they want to include in the Kabul Conference.

"We expect that the Kabul Conference will bring a stronger gender commitment and clear direction and priorities to the administration to implement the existing commitments to Afghan women, backed by increased resources and accountability of public officials," the group wrote in the statement.

The conference was convened by Equality for Peace and Development (EPD) and the Afghan Women's Network (AWN), in coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), with funding by Counterpart International and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), following concerns that women, who constitute over 51 per cent of Afghan's population, might be overlooked at the Kabul Conference.

"There is a need to consult the nation in a democracy. Women participation was very weak in the consultation process of the Kabul Conference preparations," said Narguiss Nehan of the non-governmental organization Equal Opportunity for Peace and Democracy (EPD).

Similar complaints were made by other participants during a Question and Answer session with a panel which included Ashraf Ghani, who is overseeing the Kabul Conference, and Amena Afzali, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyred and Disabled.

The Afghan Government has requested that a representative of civil society sit at the table on Tuesday alongside the 40 foreign ministers and various deputy ministers and representatives of multilateral organizations, including the European Union (EU) and NATO, confirmed to participate.

The founder of AWN, Palwasha Hassan, has been chosen by her peers to present the women's rights portion of the civil society presentation.

Calling the three-minute opportunity to speak on women's issues before the world a "historic moment," Hassan told UNAMA that the presentation "carried with it a big responsibility."

The document unanimously adopted at the women's conference will form the basis for her statement.

"The document is a living document and it is part of the Kabul Process," said Staffan de Mistura, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, who took part in the women's conference on behalf of the United Nations which is co-chairing the Kabul Conference.

The final statement "needs to be constantly followed up on with your inputs," the Special Representative, who is also the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) told the participants.

On 12 June this year, de Mistura met with Afghan women leaders to mark the 10th anniversary of the UN "Open Days for Women and Peace." The women voiced their proposals on how to strengthen their role in Afghanistan's peace process.

By Nilab Mobarez and Paulina Kubiak, UNAMA

Afghanistan launches decent work conditions programme ahead of Kabul Conference

17 July 2010 - A nationwide programme to create better working conditions for Afghans, particularly women, people with disabilities and youth, was launched today by the Afghan Government, representatives of labour and union, supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations agency dealing with work and work-related issues.

"A decent work programme is vital for Afghanistan," Amena Afzali, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyred and Disabled, told journalists following the signing ceremony at her Ministry with the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the National Union of Afghan Employees (NUAE) and the ILO.

Minister Afzali stressed that the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) would not create new jobs, but would enhance work conditions to benefit both workers and employers.

The DWCP aims to promote productive employment through labour market information and skills development; to promote and apply international labour standards; and to support employers and workers organizations which can contribute to national policy creation.

Its expected outcomes include a minimum wage for skilled and unskilled workers, and to contribute to the progressive elimination of child labour.

"The priorities of the DWCP as well as many of the outcomes of the DWCP also overlap with many of the employment related priorities that will be presented by the Government of Afghanistan at the upcoming Kabul Conference," said Hervé Berger, ILO Representative in the capital city.

In supporting the DWCP, the ILO "will also be supporting the Government of Afghanistan in accomplishing its priorities," Berger added.

As part of the new programme, the Ministry has proposed 34 centres across the country to train 100,000 workers each year for the next three years.

The Afghan Government is expected to include job training and job creation in its list of national priority programmes and projects at Tuesday's Kabul Conference, hosted by the Afghan Government and co-chaired by the United Nations.

By UNAMA



Afghanistan's top singer uses voice for national harmony

19 July 2010 - Afghan singer Farhad Darya entertains fans of all ages at a peace concert on the eve of the Kabul Conference. The Kabul-born artist said he wants to remind Afghan leaders and the international community to think of the people of Afghanistan tomorrow when making their decisions.

Darya has said that music is a constant inspiration for Afghans and allows them to communicate through ethnic and tribal boundaries. Darya has written and sung in most of Afghanistan's many languages, including Farsi-Dari, Pashto, Uzbek, Hazaragi, and Urdu, among others. He is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Goodwill Ambassador. *Photo: Ahmad Massoud*



Afghan officials, UN agencies aid locals affected by flash flood in Nangarhar Province

21 July 2010 – Afghan authorities, United Nations agencies and partners in the eastern Nangarhar Province are coordinating assistance for more than 100 people affected this morning by flash flooding caused by heavy rains.

The flooding wiped away mud homes, carried off cattle and covered roads. At least one person is reported dead.

Deputy Governor Mohamad Alam Ishaqzai convened a meeting of the humanitarian agencies in order to coordinate the rescue and relief efforts in Jalalabad, Surkhrod, Khogiyani and Chaprahar Districts of Nangarhar Province, as well as Dawlatshah District of neighbouring Laghman Province.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has committed food items for three months for the affected populations.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has mobilized its medical teams to provide emergency health services.

"The humanitarian actors are currently monitoring the situation," said Kenneth Baato Rogers of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Jalalabad.

Other departments and agencies involved include the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

By Tilak Pokharel, UNAMA



Afghan social workers train judges, lawyers and police about juvenile justice

17 July 2010 - The Afghan Department of Social Affairs has trained more than 100 members of Government and civil society in eastern Afghanistan about juvenile justice with a longer term goal of keeping underage offenders out of prisons.

"The overall objective of the training was to help bring cooperation and coordination between different elements of the judiciary system on the implementation of juvenile court in the best interest of children," said Aziz Noor of the Jalalabad branch of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which supported the training.

The three-day training was headed by the Department of Social Affairs, with support from UNICEF and the international non-governmental organization Save the Children.

It was the first time that police, prosecutors, judges, defence lawyers, youth representatives, Provincial Council members and social workers from all four provinces of the region - Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan - participated in an event together.

Among the highlights of the meeting was a discussion about a "letter of agreement" between six Government offices to more quickly and efficiently implement laws in favour of children.

By Tilak Pokharel, UNAMA

First round of Afghan Child Health Week (18-24 July)

15 July 2010 - The Ministry of Public Health in partnership with UNICEF and WHO is implementing for the first time, a comprehensive package designed to protect children in vulnerable and hard-to-reach districts.

Child Health Weeks – as this initiative is called – will target 160 000 children under five and 157,800 mothers of child-bearing age in 33 districts of the country, selected due to low immunization coverage, high immunization drop-outs, children's disease incidence, identified weaknesses of the health and nutrition system delivery and poor understanding and insufficient demand for basic services.

In addition preventive health services will accompany immunization activities during the course of the week.

The childhood diseases that children will be vaccinated against are measles, tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, Hepatitis B, Haemophilus Influenza-B, and polio.

Approximately 800 vaccination teams will mobilize across these 33 districts during the week. It is estimated that at least 4,200 personnel will be deployed to carry out the activities.

Through this initiative, the government has reinforced its commitment towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal 4, which aims to reduce child death by two-thirds by 2015.

Afghanistan has already made important progress towards expanding immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases including polio, but challenges still remain. One in five newborns is not reached by routine immunization services. Important geographical disparities exist. Conflict and natural disasters hinder access to many children. Health systems continue to be fragile especially in the war-torn provinces.

In addition a nutrition assessment of children under five years (6-59 months) will be conducted to obtain a snapshot of acute malnutrition to enable efficient response. Iron supplementation will be provided to women of childbearing age.

