



**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and  
Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)  
H.E. Mr. Nicholas Haysom**

**To the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council with Resolute Support Potential Operational  
Partner Nations at the level of Foreign Ministers**

**Brussels – Tuesday, 2 December 2014**

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Secretary-General Stoltenberg,  
Excellency President Ashraf Ghani  
Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah,  
Distinguished Ministers and Representatives,

I want to thank you for inviting UNAMA to this important meeting, as we approach the culmination of Afghanistan's security transition approaches and a new modality of NATO security assistance begins.

The United Nations in Afghanistan is not directly involved in the security sector. However, as the ISAF mission comes to an end, we recognize that sustained and predictable international security assistance in accordance with security agreements is vital. The population of Afghanistan - and indeed potential spoilers - need to clearly understand that this is not the 1990s. International attention will not waver and Afghanistan will not, again, be abandoned to further cycles of civil strife.

We have all been greatly encouraged by the peaceful political transition in Afghanistan. While the electoral process was protracted and challenging, the result is a leadership that is legitimate, freshly mandated, and broadly supported. I commend President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah for working together to make the complex national unity government work. Their common purpose demonstrates that this is a partnership of choice, not an external imposition. The mood of hope and expectation amongst the Afghan people is palpable given the clear commitments to reform, combatting corruption, and the promotion of economic development.

With the forthcoming conclusion of ISAF's mission, I take this opportunity to commend those countries that have contributed to this endeavour. I offer my condolences to the families of those international military personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice, side by side with their Afghan colleagues. While we also recognize those maimed and injured in the course of their service.

Their legacy can be seen in the assumption by the Afghan forces of lead responsibility for securing the safety of the Afghan population. Today, in the face of increasingly bold insurgent attacks, Afghan forces are holding their ground and demonstrating their resolve. The recent public recognition that the new Commander in Chief has given to the sacrifice, dedication and bravery of the armed services personnel is well earned.

In ensuring the continuing improvement and long-term viability of these forces, international commitments, as recently reiterated at the NATO Summit in Wales, must be met. This is not just about materials, but includes technical assistance and advice. UNAMA has previously highlighted three areas of previous collaboration where this assistance and support matters: civilian casualties; conditions of detention; and gender balance in the armed forces.

It is civilians who continue to bear the brunt of this grinding conflict with civilian casualties increasing to levels not seen since 2009 - the vast majority at the hands of the armed opposition groups.

UNAMA has previously recognized the significant efforts that ISAF and Members States had made in reducing civilian casualties arising out of their combat actions. Similar mechanisms of monitoring, mitigation and accountability in respect of civilian casualties are critical for Afghan forces, as are safeguards regarding detention practices that would prevent torture and ill-treatment of detainees. Advice and support for an improvement in the working conditions of women in the Afghan army and police will also ensure an inclusive service, which in turn, would contribute to combatting pervasive violence against women.

For the last 13 years the international community has rendered unprecedented support – military, financial and political - to Afghanistan. With the conclusion of the political and security transitions the form of support will necessarily change. What will not change is the shared goal of a peaceful, sovereign and increasingly prosperous Afghanistan.

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