

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS FOR TOKYO CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN**

**Tokyo, 8 July 2012**

**AS DELIVERED**

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for its commitment to peace in Afghanistan and for generously hosting this event.

I also commend the Government of Afghanistan for defining its vision for the Transformation Decade.

This is the third international conference on Afghanistan in just three months. It is aimed at defining and solidifying the engagement between Afghanistan and its partners in support of the country's self-reliance.

In Chicago last May, commitments for the future of the Afghan security forces were secured.

In Kabul last month, we saw pledges to regional support and agreement on measures to strengthen cooperation to address common threats and achieve common goals.

Today, we focus on another issue of great importance: Afghanistan's development and governance priorities and its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Under the leadership of President Karzai and his Government, real progress has been made on the path to security and broad-based development. But these gains remain fragile.

Failure to invest in governance, justice, human rights, employment and social development could negate the investments and sacrifices that have been made over the past ten years.

We must also not forget Afghanistan's humanitarian needs and its refugees.

I would also like to reiterate what I said at the NATO Summit in Chicago in May: we must do more for the country's women and children – including girls' education and women's participation in the country's political life.

We are at a critical moment in Afghanistan's history – in transition from reliance on the aid that has enabled the country's institutions to take root, to a normalized relationship of a sovereign, functioning Afghanistan with its people and with its international partners.

But let us be clear: transition must not translate into short-term measures only. We should give the people of Afghanistan the long-term prospect of a better future, and ease their worries that Afghanistan may be abandoned.

We are all aware of serious concerns regarding Afghan delivery and accountability on governance commitments. These must be addressed in the interest of the Afghan people and also to maintain donor confidence.

But we must be fully conscious that Afghanistan's institutions are still in their nascent stages.

The very programmes which offer the best hope for the sustainability of Afghan institutions should not be held hostage to complex pre-conditions.

Donors should live up to the commitments they have made to provide predictable assistance in a way that genuinely strengthens national ownership and capacity.

At the same time, it is of course Afghanistan itself that bears the primary responsibility to live up to its obligations to better serve its people in line with the commitments made in Bonn, Kabul and London.

I therefore welcome the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. This should give confidence to Afghans and donors that the commitments they have made to each other – and will make today – will be monitored and honored.

That includes ensuring that development assistance follows aid effectiveness principles.

The United Nations has been engaged in Afghanistan for many decades, well before the attention the country has received over the past decade.

As we look ahead, let us have reasonable expectations of what the United Nations can and cannot achieve.

In close coordination with the major stakeholders and within the limits of our our limited resources, we will do our utmost to help the Afghans fill the gaps that may arise as transition deepens.

That means strong support, throughout the Transformation Decade, for the country's economic and social development, for building its institutional capacity, for basic services and social protection, for jobs, justice and the rule of law.

We must all continue to stand with the people of Afghanistan in their quest for security, stability and prosperity.

An Afghanistan at peace with itself would at long last respond to its peoples' hopes of better lives for themselves and their children.

And an Afghanistan living in harmony with its neighbours, near and far, would make a tremendous contribution to regional and international peace and security.

These are the important stakes involved, well known to all of us.

In closing, allow me to recognize the contributions of so many Member States, troop contributing countries, donors, NATO and others.

Let me also commend the work of my Special Representative, Jan Kubis, and his UNAMA team.

Let us work together, at this conference and beyond, so that Afghanistan can gain the path it seeks.

Thank you very much for your leadership.

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