

Statement by Mr. Kanwal Sibal, Foreign Secretary at the High Level ad-hoc meeting on Afghanistan held at the UN Headquarters on September 24, 2003

Mr. Chairman, We welcome this opportunity to meet once again in this format, a year since we last met.

2. Our convening again today is a reiteration of the commitment the international community has, and must sustain, to put Afghanistan firmly on the path of stability, moderation and reconstruction.

3. Our convening is also testimony to the fact that there are increasing concerns as challenges are being mounted against the Government of Afghanistan, and subversion is being attempted against the process of stability and reconstruction, unfortunately with support and sponsorship from outside, not dissimilar to what had happened in the past.

4. I would like to congratulate President Karzai at the achievements of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan since we met last. The implementation of the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 has continued. Serious efforts have been made to consolidate authority of the Central Government, and to further enhance its inclusive character. We look forward to the constitution making process and the elections next year.

5. Mr. Chairman, my Government has continued with its efforts to contribute to economic reconstruction in Afghanistan. We are circulating at this meeting a compilation of the assistance provided so far. Despite our own constraints, our present commitments add up to US\$ 270 million, including 1 million tons of wheat. We have undertaken projects, in partnership with the Afghan Government, in a variety of sectors, including road transportation, airlines, health, education, police, judiciary, agriculture, information technology, telecommunications, among others. We have also initiated work on some major infrastructure projects in power transmission, hydroelectricity, irrigation and road construction.

6. Our effort has also been to carry out these projects in different parts of the country with the approval of the Afghan Government and in coordination with it.

7. We have found that our effort and contribution, including through a physical presence, has been widely welcomed in different parts of the country. We believe that economic regeneration would be among the more critical factors in promoting stability in Afghanistan and moving away from the legacy of the past more than two decades of conflict.

8. It is time, Mr. Chairman, that Afghanistan takes ownership of its own developments efforts. External efforts should essentially remain supportive of internal Afghan decisions. Afghanistan should have normal, stable, friendly relations with all, including in particular its neighbours but no country can claim any special rights on the people and territory of Afghanistan.

9. It is also time, Mr. Chairman, that the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly relations is implemented firmly.

10. Mr. Chairman, India would continue to make its efforts in support of the efforts of the Afghan Government and people to re-establish a strong, independent, sovereign and united Afghanistan. Our relations with Afghanistan are bilateral and direct. We do not see our relations with Afghanistan through the prism of any other country. Our aim is to strengthen the natural and historical processes and relationships in the region which contribute a stability and development.

Fact sheet on Indian Assistance to Afghanistan Financial Assistance

India initially announced financial assistance of US\$ 100 million for Afghanistan. Of this assistance, US\$ 31.5 m has been operationalised (details below) during 2002-03 and the balance US\$ 68.5 m will be utilised in project related assistance to Afghanistan during 2003-04 (US \$ 38.5 m) and 2004-05 (US\$ 30m). The Government of India further announced US\$ 70 mn (over and above the earlier committed US\$ 100 m) for upgradation/ re-construction of the road from Zaranj to Delaram in Afghanistan. India has also decided to contribute US \$ 200,000 to the World Bank managed Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

In addition, India has announced food assistance of 1 mn tons of wheat to Afghanistan. A part of this assistance (85517 tons of wheat) has been converted into high protein biscuits and sent to Afghanistan for its school feeding programme. A decision has been taken for supply of the second tranche of high protein biscuits to Afghanistan against 76521 tons of wheat.

Assistance provided since November 2001

Aid to Afghan Budget

- US \$ 10 mn approved as cash subsidy to the Afghan budget was transferred to the account of the Afghan Government in July 2002.
- US\$ 200,000 was paid to Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund in year 2002. US\$ 200,000 is being paid to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund for the year 2003-04.

Humanitarian assistance

- Winter clothing was sent to provide immediate humanitarian relief in Nov-Dec 2001. Another consignment of around 25 tons of winter clothing was sent in February 2003.
- A consignment of 20,000 blankets was sent to Herat in February 2002.
- Earthquake relief consisting of 200 tents, 10000 blankets, and nearly 10 tons of medicines was delivered to Afghanistan in April 2002,

Health

- The External Affairs Minister, during his visit to Kabul in August 2002, announced the setting aside US\$ 4 mn of assistance for the rehabilitation of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child health (IGICH).
An amount of US\$ 100,000 was approved for immediate assistance. The work related to the repairs, reconstruction and completion of balance works at IGICH was awarded to Central Public Works Department of India in June 2003 and has commenced on September 1, 2003.
- A team of 13 Indian doctors and paramedics have been working at Kabul since November 2001. The team is attending to patients and disbursing medicines at the polyclinic of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH).
- The Indian Medical team is also running an Operation Theatre at the Koh-e-Markaz Hospital in Kabul.
- A 6-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics is running an Operation Theatre at the Civil Hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif since April 2002.
- A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics has started its work in Herat since April 12, 2003.

- A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics has started its work in Shebargan since end-May, 2003.
- A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics has reached Kandahar and is expected to commence its work soon.
- More than 175 tons of medicines, medical instruments and equipment have been sent to Afghanistan since November 2001.
- An artificial limb Jaipur foot fitment camp was set up for Afghan amputees at Kabul military hospital in January 2002. Nearly 1000 artificial limbs were fitted during the camp. Another artificial limb fitment camp was set up from October 21- December 4, 2002 at Mazar-e-Sharif and Meymaneh for the fitting of 600 artificial limbs. During the camp, training was also provided to eight local artisans on artificial limb maintenance. On conclusion of the camp, the fitment centre along with tools, machinery and raw materials was handed over to the Afghan authorities. A large number of rehabilitation aids like wheel chairs, crutches, hearing aids, audiometers were also gifted. Two batches of six Afghan doctors and paramedics each from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health attended training in areas of their specialisation at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences from August 19-November 18, 2002, and May 29-August 27, 2003 respectively.

Civil Aviation

- The Indian Government has gifted three airbus aircrafts, along with essential spares including two engines as well as crew support to the Ariana Afghan Airlines. The first two aircraft were handed over in September and December 2002 and the third aircraft in March 2003. 51 Ariana Afghan Airlines officials have been trained by Air India. Training of 8 officials of Ariana Afghan Airlines on Flight Engineers Ground Basic Classroom Training has commenced at the Indian Airlines training Centre in Hyderabad on September 1, 2003 for a period of six weeks.

Transport

- Government has gifted 274 buses to the Afghan Government for its public transport system. Of these, most are operating in Kabul city, 25 in Kandahar, and 25 in Herat. A small number of buses are also operating in other cities.

Food Aid

- 9526 tons of fortified biscuits have been supplied for the School Feeding Programme in Afghanistan from November 2002 to June 2003. Another tranche of high protein biscuits (7496 tons) will be supplied to Afghanistan.

Education

- The External Affairs Minister, during his visit to Kabul in Aug 11st 2002, announced the setting aside of US\$ 4 m of assistance for the reconstruction of Habibia School. An amount of US\$ 100000 , was approved for immediate assistance. The work of reconstruction of Habibia School was awarded to the Central Public Works Department of India in June 2003 and has commenced on September 1, 2003.
- Two English language Instructors have been teaching English at the Institute of Diplomacy since February 2002 to the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Government Departments of Afghanistan.
- Two additional English language teachers have been deputed to Kabul since March 10, 2003 to teach English at the Ministries of Information & Culture and Labour & Social Welfare.
- 8646 educational kits were gifted. to the students of Habibia School in Kabul in Aug-Sept 2002.
- The Government has decided to gift 20,000 desk-cum-benches for schools in Afghanistan. The supplies of the desk-cum-benches from India have commenced in end-July 2003.
- In-service training of seven Afghan teachers from the Ministry of Education has commenced at Delhi Public School, Mathura Road on September 4, 2003 for a period of six weeks.
- Fifty slots have been allocated to Afghanistan for training at various institutes in India under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation, Programme. 43 Afghan nationals have attended the training under the Programme during 2002-03 in the fields of Rural Industry Promotion, Training Methods & Skills for Managers, Small Business Planning & Promotion, Urban Development Management, Audit of Receipts, Legislative Drafting, Development Journalism, Audit of Public Enterprises, Participatory Planning and Management of Watershed Projects, Micro Planning for Poverty Reduction & Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development in Agriculture & Rural Development, Educational Planning and Administration and Urban Infrastructure Planning & Management.
- 10 slots were allocated to Afghanistan under the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations for higher studies in India in 2002- 03, of which three have been utilised by Afghanistan. 4 slots have been allocated to Afghanistan under the scheme for 2003-04.

- 10 slots have been allocated to Afghanistan under the Cultural Exchange Programme Scholarship Scheme for 2003-04.

Diplomacy

- Two batches of 20 Afghan Diplomats each have been trained at the Foreign Service Institute in February-May and August-November 2002. The training of the third batch of Afghan Diplomats by FSI has commenced in July 2003.
- 15 officials from the Presidential Secretariat of Afghanistan were trained at the Foreign Service Institute from October 2002 - March 2003.
- Two Afghan diplomats attended a two-week module on Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats in January 2003.

Culture, Heritage, Media & Sports

- A team of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting visited Afghanistan in March 2002 to assess the requirements. Based on its recommendations, the Government of India has awarded the following works to Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited in September 2003:
- Setting up of a modern offset Printing Machine along with DTP Facility.
- Setting up of a new 100kw SW transmitter.
- Setting up of TV Satellite Uplinking/Downlinking facility.
- A consignment of musical instruments was sent for the Afghan Radio and Television to Kabul on 10th February 2002. Another consignment of musical instruments has been gifted to Kabul University in April 2003. The Government has also gifted musical instruments to the Ceremonial Band of the Presidential Guard of Afghanistan in June 2003.
- US \$ 20,000 were granted for the repair of Hazrat Ali Shrine in Mazar-e-Sharif in September 2002.
- Two batches of 15 Afghan journalists each and third batch of 19 Afghan journalists have been trained at Indian Institute of Mass Communication from August -October, 2002, January -March, 2003 and June- August. 2003 respectively.

- Two choreographers were sent from ICCR for a period of two weeks in April, 2003 , for assisting Afghan authorities in producing programme for national day celebrations on April 28, 2003.
- Indian Council of Cultural Relations has allocated two seats to Afghanistan for learning music in India during 2002-03.

Security and Rule of Law

Afghan National Army

- The Government has decided to gift 300 vehicles to the Afghan National Army. Of these, 115 vehicles are ready and are being despatched.

Police

- Training was imparted to 250 Afghan police officers and cadets in twelve different courses in India from July-September 2002.

Judiciary

- Eighteen Afghan judges and lawyers were trained at the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi from February-May, 2003.

Agriculture

- Nearly 67 tons of vegetable seeds have been supplied to the Ministry of Agriculture of Afghanistan in three Phases in Aug-Sept 2002, February 2003 and August 2003.
- 15 officials from the Ministry of Agriculture have attended a training course in the field of Cooperative Farming and Marketing at RICM, Bangalore from December 2002- March 2003.
- 16 officials from the Ministry of Agriculture have attended a training course on Operation & Maintenance of Agricultural machinery and equipment at CFMTTI, Bhopal from January - May, 2003.
- A sericulture expert was deputed to Afghanistan for a period of one week (July 14-20, 2003) to suggest possible areas of co-operation and assistance in the field of sericulture.

Information Technology

- An IT specialist has been deputed to the Afghan Government since June 20, 2003 for a period of one year.
- A LAN network with Internet access via VSAT was established alongwith supply of necessary equipment in the office of the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan. The LAN has been extended to additional twenty nodes alongwith supply of necessary equipment.
- A computer training center was set up in Kabul from July 2002-Jan 2003 for providing computer training to Afghan officials. The centre was handed over to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2003.
- Two Computer Training Centres have been set up in Kandahar and Herat in August 2003. A decision has been taken for setting up another two Computer Training Centres at Pul-e-Khumri and Jalalabad.

Banking

- Three experts from RBI were deputed to assist the Da Afghanistan Bank in July 2002.
- Six experts from various banks in India have been deputed to the Da Afghanistan Bank in July-August 2003 for a period of six months to one year.

Commerce

- A Preferential Trade Agreement was signed between India and Afghanistan on March 6, 2003 and has come into effect since May 2003. The Agreement provides duty-free access to the import of fig-dried, pistachio (open and closed shell), mulberries dried, pine nuts roasted, melon fresh, asafetida, lapis lazuli, ruby, and emeralds from Afghanistan. A 50% concession has been extended on duty on green, black and red raisins, apricots dried, walnuts, plums dried, almonds, raisins golden, cherries sour dried, fresh grapes, apples, apricots, pomegranates, anise seeds, caraway seeds, linseeds, sesame seeds, liquorice roots apricot nuts bitter, and alpha alpha seeds.
- A team of experts from Central Warehousing Corporation had visited Kandahar in November 2002 for carrying out a feasibility study of construction of cold storage in the city. Based on its recommendations the Government of India has awarded the work of construction of a cold storage of 5000 ton capacity in

Kandahar to Central Warehousing Corporation. The work on the project will commence in the third week of September 2003.

Urban Development

- Civil engineering lab equipment and measuring instruments were gifted to the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing of Afghanistan in May 2003.
- The Government has decided to gift 76 utility vehicles/equipments (water tankers, rear drop tippers, dump trucks, bulldozers, motor graders and garbage tippers) to the Kabul Municipality from Eicher, Tata International Ltd., and BEML. 35 of these vehicles from Eicher International Limited have been already handed over to the Kabul Municipality.

Infrastructure Development

Road Construction

- Feasibility study and detailed project assessment for upgradation of road stretch from Delaram to Zaranj in Afghanistan has been carried out by a team of experts. During the visit of President Karzai to India on March 5-8, 2003, Prime Minister has announced a financial assistance of US\$ 70 m to reconstruction/upgradation of the road.

Water Resources

- WAPCOS has carried out detailed Project assessment on rehabilitation of Mini/Micro hydro projects, Khartabad Irrigation Project, Quargha reservoir and Amir Ghazi Dam in Afghanistan. ,
- WAPCOS has carried out the field survey and water analysis to identify location of 50 deep wells in Herat province of Afghanistan. Following the survey, the work of drilling of 24 deep, wells in Herat province has been awarded to W APCOS and has commenced on September3~ 2003.
- WAPCOS has conducted the Feasibility study and the detailed project assessment (March- August, 2003) for completion of Salma Dam Project in Herat Province.

Industry

- A team from Ministry of Small Scale Industries and NSIC has visited Afghanistan and carried out feasibility study for rehabilitation of the Industrial Park in Kabul.

Training

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