

**Response by the Representative of Afghanistan,
To the address by NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe,
General James L. Jones,
At the Permanent Council meeting,
14 September, 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
Afghanistan joins others in warmly welcoming General James L. Jones to the Permanent Council and thanks for his very comprehensive report about the NATO mission in Afghanistan. We highly appreciate NATO's continued engagement and commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction, security and fight against terrorism.

During the past five years, in partnership with the international community, we have made significant progress in rebuilding our country, but despite considerable accomplishments, the challenges Afghanistan is still facing are immense and we have a long way ahead. Terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption, and poverty are the main threats and obstacles we have to tackle.

Terrorists are burning our schools, killing our community elders, teachers, doctors, aid workers and attacking Afghan and allied troops who came to help secure Afghanistan.

At the same time, terrorism is deeply intertwined with drug trade, which represent another major source of insecurity and potential instability in Afghanistan and the region. We can only overcome these challenges through common efforts and co-operation.

In this context, I would like to applaud the long-term partnership agreement between NATO and Afghanistan, which was signed during the recent visit of NATO Secretary General Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to Kabul.

The signing of this agreement is not only important in terms of military and police training, but is of great importance in further promoting Afghanistan's status in the international community. During the signing

ceremony, President Karzai expressed his hope that the agreement would enable Afghanistan to address terrorism with greater strength and help the country stand on its own feet.

We believe that the menace of terrorism cannot be defeated by military means alone. Fanaticism is fed by poverty and, therefore, sustainable development must be made one of the key elements in fighting against this evil. The progress in all areas of rebuilding Afghanistan would not be possible without improvement in security, but at the same time the security matters cannot be resolved without reconstruction and development. As you know, it is circle, where one matter depends on the other.

It is our common task to redouble our efforts at all dimensions of the fight against terrorism. We must go after the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and destroy their training grounds, their inspiration and financing, and rid Afghanistan and the region from this threat.

Afghanistan is strongly committed to its obligation with the international community in the common goal to uproot these threats. Due to its strategic geographical position in the region, we must win the battle in Afghanistan. It goes without saying that failure in Afghanistan is not an option for us, nor is it a choice for the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to express once again our profound gratitude for the continued support and commitment of the international community and, especially, NATO for helping Afghanistan. The Afghan people are very appreciative of this help to provide better opportunities for millions of deprived people, to rebuild a shattered nation, and combat the forces that threaten human and world security.

Thank you for your attention