



**Dear readers,**

This month in my message I would like to comment on the importance of strategic partnership with international community and the importance of regional cooperation towards development and economic cooperation in Afghanistan. After surviving more than 30 years' of war and conflicts, Afghanistan needs to establish its infrastructures and economy as well to strengthen the rule of law and good governance. Achieving this goal explains the efforts of Afghanistan government to make bridges between the country and international community.

Singing the long term strategic partnership agreement assures the countries continued assistance after 2014 in term of economic, politic, security, media, and all cultural factors.

So far the strategic cooperation agreements have been agreed to be signed with France, Italy and England. We are looking very much forward towards signing the strategic partnership with US in a few coming months.

The Fifth regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V) which will take place in Dushanbe on March 2012 is another significant event. This conference will be hosted by Tajikistan and chaired by Afghanistan and Tajikistan to discuss the economic affairs, prosperity, stability and regional cooperation in Middle Asia and beyond. "Afghanistan and the Perspective of future Regional Economic Cooperation" is another important topic to be discussed during this conference.

We are looking forward to sign strategic partnerships agreement with other friends and to hold such important conferences.

**Peace,**

**Manizha Bakhtari**  
**Ambassador**

**H.E. President Hamid Karzai Leaves Afghanistan for Europe to Sign Strategic Partnership Agreements with Italy, France and United Kingdom**



On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012, H.E. President Hamid Karzai leading a high level delegation left Kabul for a 5-days trip to Turkmenistan and Europe. According to the Presidential press office, President Karzai's official trip is scheduled to first land in Ashgabat for a bilateral meeting with President Qurban Quly Berdimuhamedov on issues of mutual interest between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan aiming to expand and enhanced bilateral cooperation.

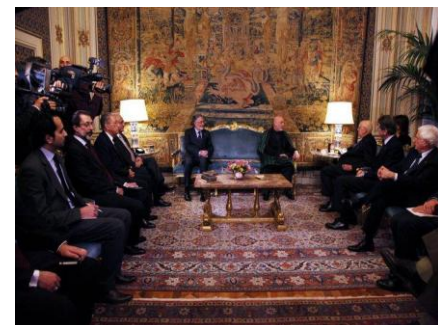


The main purpose of the trip to Europe is to sign the long-term strategic partnership agreements with European countries in regard to the continued assistance and cooperation with the Afghan people in their efforts for reconstruction and development. Officials from the presidential palace said: "H.E. President Hamid Karzai will sign a long-term partnership document between Afghanistan and Italy aiming to enhance Italian assistance and cooperation with Afghanistan.

During his stay in Italy H.E. President Karzai will meet with Prime Minister Mario Monti and a number of other high ranking officials including the Speakers of both Houses of the Parliament. The president will then leave Rome for Paris, France, where aside from signing an important strategic partnership treaty, he will meet with president Sarkozy and other senior government officials and is expected to participate at a reception hosted to his honor by the French Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Bernard Accoyer.



On Friday evening, the President will be heading to London, where he will meet Prime Minister David Cameron and sign a long-term Afghan-UK cooperation document. The president will be attending a joint press conference with Prime Minister Cameron.



President is accompanied by Foreign Minister Dr. Rasoul, National Security Advisor Dr. Spanta, Mining Minister Dr. Shahrani, Chief of Staff to the President office Mr. Abdul Karim Khuram and President's Spokesman Mr. Aimal Faizi.

### By 2015 Afghanistan will be self-sufficient in fuel



H.E. Wahidullah Shahrani, Minister of mine, on Monday January 2 2012, in relation to the Afghanistan fuel self-sufficiency said: "By 2015 Afghanistan will not only become self-sufficient in fuel production, but will also export oil and gas to other countries."

Currently Afghanistan imports three billion tons of fuel from abroad. Recently an agreement was signed with a Chinese firm (CNCP) on oil and gas extraction at the Amu River.



H.E. Shahrani said: "The agreement with the Chinese company which was signed on 28 December is a key step toward Afghanistan's self-sufficiency in oil and gas." The Amu River field is estimated to have more than 87 million barrels of fuel reserves and international investors will be briefed on other fuel zones in the north of Afghanistan this year.

The oil exploitation in Afghanistan will further increase government revenue in natural resources and would also create thousands of job opportunities for the local Afghans.

### Hydro-power plant of Gerishk district will be strengthen and equip

On Sunday 22 January 2012, Dr. Omar Zakhailwal Minister of Finance signed a contract with Rout Einker Director of the Asian section of the Asian Development Bank, in Kabul. Through this contract the Asian Development Bank will assist USD 75, 4 million for strengthening and equipping the power system and the hydro-power system and the hydro-power plant of Gerishk district of Helmand province.



Dr. Omar Zakhailwal said: "this aid will be utilized for strengthening and equipping of the hydro-power plant of Gerishk district and for reconstruction of 30 km transmission line and installation of the power meters in the district." He added: "The project will provide hundreds of job opportunities for the local people in the district."

### Training Center for vulnerable women inaugurated in Northern Afghanistan

In recent years this is the second training center for agricultural services for women in the Balkh province. Officials in charge of the center said to the media in Blakh: "Only 20% cost of the center is assisted by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the remaining share is provided by the women of this center." They also added: "At the center women who are familiar with agricultural activities and have skills in preparing jams, bee-keeping, handicrafts, tailoring and marketing they will train other vulnerable women in the center."

### H.E. Dr. Zulmay Rasoul, met with Ján Kubiš, new UN Special Representative for Afghanistan



On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 H.E. Dr. Zulmay Rasoul met with Ján Kubiš, new UN Special Representative for Afghanistan.

During the meeting H.E. Dr. Zulmay Rasoul praised the role of the UN in the reconstruction and maintaining security in Afghanistan and emphasized that Afghanistan requires more assistance for its reconstruction after three decades of war and tragedy.

He added, "The role of the UN is very important, in particular your appointment as the UN's special envoy to Afghanistan, especially in transition and peace processes."



In return, Ján Kubiš said: "I have come here as a colleague and cooperater of Afghanistan and I'm intending to share my close consultations with the Afghan ministry of foreign affairs. Therefore, I want to expand and improve the UNAMA operating plan based on new work rules in a few months."

### Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt visits Afghanistan



On Saturday 21 January 2011, H.E. President Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, met Mrs. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the Danish Prime Minister at the presidential palace in Kabul. During the meeting both sides discussed the transition of security from the international forces to the Afghanistan security forces and the process of peace talks with the oppositions. The Danish Prime Minister informed President Karzai on her visit to Helmand and called the security situation in Helmand as satisfactory. Mrs. Helle Thorning-Schmidt also pledged that Denmark is committed to assist Afghanistan beyond 2014. At the end H.E. President Karzai, representing the people of Afghanistan expressed his gratitude to the people of Denmark for their assistances to the people of Afghanistan in the past ten years. In a separate meeting with Mohammad Gulab Mangal, the governor of the Helmand province, Mrs. Helle Thorning-Schmidt underlined that Denmark will continue its assistance to Afghanistan and in a joint press conference after the meeting Mrs. Helle Thorning stated: "The aim of my trip to the province was to evaluate the transition process and to meet with civil and military officials based in the province." Mrs. Helle Thorning added that she regarded the transition process in the province as an important step which would enjoy Danish support. Denmark has almost 740 soldiers posted in the Grishk district of the Helmand province.

### H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili met the Swedish Ambassador Mr. Torbjörn Pettersson

H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili, second vice president of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan received Mr. Torbjörn Pettersson, the Swedish Ambassador in his office on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2012. During the meeting both sides exchanged views on the peace process, important issues of Afghanistan and other issues of mutual interest between the two countries.



H.E. Khalili appreciated the assistance of the Swedish government in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan and reiterated on further expansion of Swedish assistance in different provinces. He also emphasized: "peace should not be sacrificed at the cost of past achievements but should come within the framework of constitution, democracy and preservation of joint achievements of Afghanistan and the international community in the past decade." He added: "International community is the facilitator of the peace process and the Afghan government should lead this process."



During the meeting the Swedish ambassador while confirming the assertions of H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili in relation to the peace process talks, emphasized: "Sweden will work hard to preserve the joint achievements of Afghanistan and the international community."

### Swedish university Master program in Afghanistan



Teacher Education Master Program (TEMP) is a Swedish initiative, offered by the University of Karlstad in Sweden and financed by Sweden International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is implementing the program in Afghanistan. The program was inaugurated on 14 January 2012 in Kabul and Ambassador Torbjörn Pettersson gave a speech at the inauguration ceremony.



Ambassador Torbjörn Pettersson said: "The training will take place in Kabul and will be provided in English. The program is comprised of face-to-face sessions, video transmissions and self-studies." Each year 30 teacher educators will be awarded a Master Degree in Education Sciences through Karlstad University. At the end of 2014, a total of 90 teacher educators will be awarded a Master Degree. In addition, each year 60 TEMP candidates (including the 90 admitted in TEMP) will receive a five months preparatory training in English, computer and basic research.

**Project to improve Afghanistan justice system**



An agreement to improve the quality of Justice System in Afghanistan was signed between the acting Justice Minister, Syed Yousuf Halim, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Deputy Representative Mrs. Ashita Mittal and the Chargé d'Affaires of the Japanese Embassy Mr. Seiji Okada, in Kabul. Afghan officials said: "Japan pledged to assist the Justice system with \$9million on the capacity building of justice departments in three Afghan provinces over the next three years.



The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Deputy Representative Mrs. Ashita Mittal Mittal, in this regard said "The money will be spent on conducting training workshops to strengthen the criminal justice system, setting up training centers for judges and prosecutors and arranging literacy course for prisoners in Herat, Balkh and Bamyan provinces." She added: "an improved justice system would solve the current challenges in Afghanistan. A strong justice system can facilitate the maintenance of law and order and serve as a peaceful mechanism for resolving disputes, while preventing impunity for crimes committed during, as well as after a conflict."

According to the Japanese embassy in Afghanistan, Japan has spent nearly \$2billion in Afghanistan over the past 10 years.

Mr. Seiji Okada, Chargé d'Affaires of the Japanese Embassy in Kabul agreed that human rights and security were inseparable from justice; therefore Japan has made this first step of assistance in the Rule of Law sector, believing that this project will improve access to justice at district level in the three provinces of Afghanistan.

**Water storage inaugurated in Ghazni province**



An official from Ghazni Province said to the media: "At the end of December 2011, a newly-built water dam was inaugurated in the Deh Yak district of Ghazni. The dam project cost around \$470,000 which was provided by the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Province."

In this regard Mr. Musa Khan, the Governor of Ghazni province announced: "The water storage facility would strengthen the local economy as almost 7,500 acres of land would come under irrigation, thus benefiting half of the 72,000 residents of the district." Furthermore Mr. Musa Khan promised the construction of similar water dams in the four other districts of the Ghazni province in the future.

**A new training center for Afghan diplomats**



On Saturday 21 of January 2012, a newly constructed US-funded training facility was launched at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Kabul. In a statement the agency providing United States' economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide, (USAID) said: "The construction was part of USAID's Afghanistan Foreign Affairs Institutional Reform (FAIR) project, aimed to enhance the capacity of officials and improve the functionality of ministry's headquarters." The USAID deputy mission director at the inauguration ceremony said: "The United States government is proud to provide the technical assistance, equipment and infrastructure that will facilitate the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan." The Director of the Institute of Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed his gratitude to the people of the United States for their assistance in Afghanistan and added: "The new center will make it possible for the Institute to conduct more standardized training for their staff included English language courses.



The Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo  
Accredited to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland

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