



Government of Afghanistan

Afghanistan Development Forum Transport National Programme

Speech presented by

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**Ministry of Public Works
Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
Ministry of Transport**

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INTRODUCTION

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Thankyou for giving me the opportunity to talk today about the transport sector in Afghanistan.

My presentation today will be in two parts. Firstly, I will provide an overview of the transport national programme, its objectives and investment priorities over the longer term. I will, however, only briefly touch on these as the main focus. The second part of this speech is the priorities for the transport programme over the coming years.

First let me provide some background to the transport sector in Afghanistan. The sector comprises three Ministries: the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism; the Ministry of Transport; and the Ministry I'm responsible for - the Ministry of Public Works.

Collectively, the Ministries are responsible for the country's airports, national highways and provincial roads, transportation services in Kabul and throughout the rest of the country, tourism, railways and the regulations and policies that relate to the sector.

The overall objective of the programme is the promotion of national and regional integration, development and security, by restoring, expanding and improving roads and highways, civil aviation and transport services.

This will allow efficient public and private sector operations in respective areas of competence; strengthen market and international linkages; and create opportunities for the poor to share in the benefits of growth and prosperity.

The transport infrastructure of Afghanistan has deteriorated significantly over the last twenty years. Public transportation services, Afghanistan's airports and national roads have been degraded due to unrest and lack of resources.

The current condition of the transport sector is further highlighted by the following statistics.

- Only sixteen per cent of Afghanistan's national road network is paved;
- None of the country's airports meet the International Civil Aviation Organisation's standards;
- There are approximately fourteen vehicles per thousand people;
- In urban areas there is not even one bus per thousand people; and
- The country has no dispatch and receiving stations that connect with neighbouring countries' rail networks.

The examples above demonstrate the need for significant investment in Afghanistan's transport infrastructure. The transport national programme's public investment programme and the Securing Afghanistan's Future documents describe these investment priorities over the coming ten years in more detail.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

I'll now spend a couple of minutes outlining the longer term priorities in the transport sector.

Firstly, the key investment priorities for roads and highways include the construction of 2,323 kilometers of super corridors. These dual carriage ways will connect Afghanistan to Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and will foster regional trade. The program will also include extending the National Highway network to provincial capitals and 4,484 kilometers of provincial roads.

Secondly, the civil aviation sector will be crucial to support high value export industries in Afghanistan. Airports and infrastructure will be improved to meet international standards and carry a substantially increased volume of people and goods.

The upgrading of Kabul airport to a fully-fledged international airport and the upgrading of airports in Herat, Mazar-I- sharif, and Jalalabad to international standards are key priorities in the civil aviation sector. In addition, Afghanistan need

to ensure it has an air traffic management system capable of handling increased international and domestic air traffic.

Another priority for the civil aviation and tourism ministry is the revival and enhancement of the domestic tourism industry. This will be achieved through the development of over 20 national tourist sites over the coming years.

Thirdly, the transport sector will be enhanced through Afghan international transport managing a 75 truck fleet facilitating movement of strategic materials to remote areas and Millie Bus Enterprises managing a fleet of buses in Kabul and other major urban centers easing pressure on mass transit.

Other priorities for the Ministry of Transport include establishing six technical and maintenance workshops in Kabul and other key regional centers, construction of four transport terminals in Kabul, and construction of administrative buildings for transport management.

Finally, the railway sector will see the construction of railway lines linking Afghanistan to neighboring countries' rail networks, promoting the flow of bulk goods into and out of Afghanistan. In addition, dispatch and receiving stations at strategically important locations around the country will facilitate the efficient flow of these goods.

To implement these priorities, the document *Securing Afghanistan's Future* puts the cost of these investments at 7.5 billion dollars over the next seven years. For the

fiscal year 1383, the expenditures required for the transport sector is 931 million dollars, of which 572 million dollars or 61 per cent has already been allocated.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

The rest of this presentation relates to priority projects that still require funding. I will touch on priority projects for each ministry, but first I'd like to mention the transport sector review.

One key development over the last six months has been the conclusion of the transport sector review. The review provides the overall vision and development strategy for the transport sector over the next ten to fifteen years. Examining transport from a national perspective, the review forms the basis for the Government of Afghanistan to formulate transport policies, restructure and integrate sector institutions, and formulate projects for development of the transport sector in the short to medium term.

The key component of the transport sector review is the Policy Statement for the Transport Sector. The Policy Statement focuses on policy, and institutional and capacity building issues in road traffic and transport, roads and civil aviation.

Three of the key projects from the review relate to the introduction of capacity building units in each of the transport Ministries. These units will assist Ministries to reform, restructure and strengthen and to manage donor financed capital and technical assistance projects. They will play an important role in coordinating

projects, provide improved monitoring and evaluation activities of donor funded projects, and assist with project implementation.

Now onto other priority projects, beginning with civil aviation:

MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM

The civil aviation sector in Afghanistan requires the continued support of the international community; with the rehabilitation at Kabul International Airport and regional airports, and the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's Civil Aviation College as priorities for the forthcoming year.

Kabul International Airport has undergone significant improvements over the last two years but much work needs to be done. The Ministry has recently developed a master plan for the airport and the success of this plan depends on the continued support of the donor community. Clearing the airport of mines, ensuring continuous provision of power, fencing the airport's grounds and resurfacing the taxi way are examples of priorities for the airport during 1383.

The regional airports require greater assistance. The majority of Afghanistan's **domestic and regional airports** have been destroyed during the years of conflict and require emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation. Previously the airports consisted of local terminal, professional, technical and administration offices, control tower, firefighter garages, firefighter vehicles, and runways. Most of this infrastructure and equipment has been destroyed.

The airports were built on the basis of their strategic importance and took into consideration the transportation requirements of the time. The airports considered for reconstruction are considered important for the future development of the country and are still considered strategically important. The Asian Development Bank will commence soon a feasibility study on upgrading regional airports and the Ministry will work closely with the consultants to determine the priority airports.

The final civil aviation project I'd like to discuss is the Civil Aviation College in Kabul. The college provides essential professional training for students from all over Afghanistan, providing training on air traffic controlling, radio navigation, meteorology, radio techniques, communications and fire fighting. This project aims to improve the physical infrastructure of the college, provide materials, such as books and laboratory equipment, for students and college trainers, and provide an environment that promotes learning for the civil aviation sector in Afghanistan.

The college is an important mechanism used by the Ministry to train the younger generation of civil aviation personnel, and with professionals reaching retirement age, new staff must be trained to ensure that skills and knowledge are passed onto the younger generation.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

For the Ministry of Transport, the priority projects are the construction of workshops, parking and administration offices for Millie Bus Enterprises, a detailed feasibility

study and reconstruction of the Trolley Bus network in Kabul and the construction of four transport terminals in Kabul.

Over the last two years, donors have donated over 500 buses to Afghanistan. Much of these have gone to Millie Bus Enterprises for the provision of public transport services in Kabul. However, the **workshops, parking and administration facilities for Millie Bus Enterprises** have largely been destroyed and in order to provide adequate maintenance and parking facilities for the buses, new facilities are required.

The engineering and technical proposals for the project have already been completed and work has already commenced on the chosen site. The surrounding wall, technical buildings and part of the parking bays are complete. The implementation of this project will improve the technical urban transport services and increase the capacity of urban transport in Kabul.

The second project I'd like to discuss is the **trolley bus network** in Kabul. As early as 1929, German engineers built the first trolleybus line in Kabul. In the 1970's it was modernized by Russian technology and the system eventually encompassed about five kilometers.

The rolling stock consisted of 80 trolleybuses and Czech Republic provided technical assistance for the establishment of a large depot in the Khushal Khan area. The trolleybus project of Kabul city was completed and utilized to full capacity in 1977 carrying approximately 21 million passengers per year.

Trolleybuses were active until 1991, but the domestic wars caused it to stop operations. During the hostilities, the rolling stock and the electrical supply system were completely destroyed. A feasibility study has been undertaken by a private sector company and the project could commence as soon as funding is secured.

The final Ministry of Transport project is the **construction of transport terminals** in Kabul. Four terminals will be built on the outskirts of Kabul, providing improved access to transport services to provinces and a decrease in the current urban traffic load in Kabul.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

There have been many successes over the last two years in rebuilding the road infrastructure in Afghanistan. Reconstruction of the ring road connecting Afghanistan's major cities is well underway thanks to the generous support of the international community. International link roads have been funded and are currently undergoing rehabilitation.

In order to meet the longer term priorities for the road network the support of the international community is still needed. There are many road projects that require funding. These include the Herat to Bamyan Road and two north-south highways, which will provide considerably shorter travel times between Afghanistan's cities. However, today I'd like to focus on four other priority road projects.

Firstly, the Taloqan to Faizabad road. The road connects Afghanistan to Tajikistan and will play an important role in the economy of Afghanistan as a transit point for goods traveling from Tajikistan and China. The World Bank has already allocated funds to commence the project and an in-depth feasibility study has been prepared by an international consultant firm. However, additional funds are required to complete the project.

The next road is the international link road to Turkmenistan. The Herat to Torghundi road connects Afghanistan with Turkmenistan and will serve as an important transit road between the central Asian countries and Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.

While the Kunduz to Kholm Road in Northern Afghanistan is also an important transit road. The road connects Kunduz to Mazar-e-Sharif and will serve as a transit road between Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Upon completion, the distance between Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif will be shortened by approximately 100 kilometers, ensuring shortened travel times between the two cities.

The last road project is the Kabul to Charikar road. This road is about fifty kilometers in length and connects eight major northern cities to Kabul. The road is an important transit road and has the highest traffic volume among Afghanistan's national highways. Unfortunately, this traffic volume has resulted in the loss of more than a hundred lives in the last year as a result of traffic accidents.

Part of the road is two lanes each way and these sections had minimal accidents last year. The remaining sections of the road have been planned to be widened for some time and indeed some work has been completed. For example, a number of culverts were extended and earth work was partially completed. However, due to lack of resources these works were stopped. Given the roads importance as a transit road to Afghanistan's Northern provinces and its high accident rate, this project is a priority for the Ministry.

Finally, with the current road projects being implemented and donor support sought for the others there is a need to undertake proper road maintenance on Afghanistan's existing and new roads.

Over many years, the maintenance equipment of the Ministry has been depleted as a result of lack of appropriate expenditure on maintenance and new equipment, and the loss of skilled mechanics and engineers to operate and maintain the equipment. The last two years has seen some 3000 kilometers of roads rehabilitated by the international community and the Ministry. In order to maintain this road network to a high standard, ongoing and emergency road maintenance needs to be continually undertaken.

To undertake efficient and effective road maintenance, the Ministry will establish seven maintenance zones to cover primary roads and secondary roads throughout the country. However, in order to accomplish this, it is necessary to have reliable road

maintenance equipment and this project will fully equip the seven zones with the necessary equipment to do so.

IMPLEMENTATION

Before concluding I'd like to discuss how the transport national programme will implement these projects.

There are currently many international experts working alongside Afghan counterparts in the Ministries. Experts are working with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism to ensure Afghanistan's airports will soon meet international standards. Donors are working with the Ministry of Transport to ensure donated buses are put to good use and the Ministry of Public Works is working closely with Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services within the Ministry of Planning to develop detailed proposals for road projects.

The private sector in Afghanistan will play an important role in implementing projects and will be engaged to provide goods and services to support project completion.

In addition, the capacity building units I mentioned earlier will work with Ministry staff to lift the capacity to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate donor and Government funded projects. Importantly by local staff in Ministries.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the transport sector has undergone significant progress over the last two years. Work continues on Kabul International Airport, some five hundred buses have been donated to improve access to public transport and major roads like the Kabul to Kandahar road have been rehabilitated decreasing journey times around the country.

The three Ministries are committed to implementing projects in a transparent and accountable fashion. Thus ensuring the benefits are realized by all Afghani's.

Thanks to the generous support of the international community the signs for the transport sector look promising.

However, as I have highlighted, the end goal is some way off and the support must continue if Afghanistan's transport sector is to meet the ambitious goals it has set.

The upgrading of domestic and regional airports; the building of transport infrastructure in Kabul and around the country; the reconstruction of Afghanistan's road network; and the development of the country's rail infrastructure.

All these require your continued support.

Thank you.