

COLOMBIA



**Speech by
Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia
Her Excellency Monica Lanzetta
at the Afghanistan International Conference
Bonn, December 5, 2011**

Mr. President,

First of all, I would also like to thank the government of Germany for hosting this important Conference.

I want to commend Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for his important contribution as Head of UNAMA this last years, in improving the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the stabilization and democratization process, as well as to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan. I want also to congratulate Mr. Jan Kubis for his designation as new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as from the 1st of January 2012.

We welcome also the results of the Istanbul Regional Conference of last November, that should promote and deepen the cooperation of the countries in the region.

"From Transition to Transformation"

We come here today to talk about strengthening international cooperation and support for Afghanistan's future. We are meeting ten years after the Petersberg conference to discuss how to mobilize the international community in support of Afghanistan's future. The transition process is well under way, and, as agreed at the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, a gradual drawdown of ISAF forces has already begun, and should be completed by the end of 2014.

A process of transformation should follow, in which the Government of Afghanistan will gradually consolidate its sovereignty through the strengthening of state institutions, the rule of law and good governance.

Let me address the three key issues proposed by the organizers:

- Regarding the Support for the political process we agree that only a political process can lead to lasting stability in Afghanistan. It is necessary to continue building relationships with local authorities and community leaders establish processes that enable inclusive dialogue to facilitate reconciliation with all segments of the population. The recent decision by the United Nations Security Council to separate the lists of the Taliban and of Al Qaeda individuals and associated entities and the recognition of the role of the Government with respect to requests for delisting, is a decision that will undoubtedly contribute to the reconciliation process in Afghanistan and to building trust between the parties.

Colombia, as current non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council supports this view. The principles for national reconciliation must recognize that the process must be Afghan-led; it must be inclusive; it must include renunciation to violence and terrorism; and, last but not least, it must be respected and supported by all the neighbors.

- Regarding the Civilian aspects of transition until 2014, particularly the non-military aspects of the security, we commend the efforts aimed at the transition to greater Afghan ownership and leadership and to continue working within the agreed timetable for Afghan forces to take the lead in security by 2014, an aim that should be guided by advances in the field. We support the overall objective of ensuring the transition by enabling effective civilian authority and strengthening governance throughout the country. Colombia has a lot of experience in the fight against illicit drugs and organized crime, as well as in DDR processes, and the integral action for the recovery of the civilian institutions after the military recovery, and we are willing to share this experience. Recently, through the United States, two Colombian experts went to Afghanistan to participate in a program of humanitarian attention to the demobilized.
- Regarding the Long-term engagement for Afghanistan in its region beyond 2014 we support the view that economic development requires progress in governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption. Colombia has already, since 2005, been giving cooperation to the afghan police on the fight against illicit drugs, and we will continue to do so, if the afghan authorities so wish. We also have been discussing for some months now, the possibility of giving training to the security forces of Afghanistan and we hope we will be able to clear the way to do so, even beyond the 2014 date if necessary. We also welcome the New Silk Road initiative already described as “a web of transportation, trade, and energy links” that should once again connect the Heart of Asia with Europe and the South and East of Asia. A strong and credible commitment for Afghanistan also needs sustainable economic development in the region as a whole.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan faces many problems that can threaten the sustainability of progress. Violence continues to be one of the main factors that affect their progress and has resulted in an increase in humanitarian needs, as well as the number of civilians killed and displaced. We reiterate our call on all parties to the conflict to meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights and to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

We emphasize the importance of joint regional initiatives taken to combat the various aspects of the world drug problem affecting Afghanistan and the region. Constructive participation of the various regional and extra regional actors involved in the implementation of common strategies to combat the world drug problem in all its aspects, under the principle of shared responsibility, contributes to the stabilization and promotion of mutual trust between the neighboring countries and beyond the region.

Safety is an essential condition for strengthening the rule of law, the exercise of fundamental freedoms and the establishment of the basis for economic development. Also achieving greater coherence in the efforts and implementation of programs by the United Nations and the international community to support the Afghan Government will contribute to the exercise of Afghan sovereignty in all aspects for the welfare of its people.

Thank you.