

Minister's speech, Bonn conference, 5th Dec 2011

Ten years ago, foundations for peaceful and democratic Afghanistan were laid down here in Bonn. Today, there is the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, with its president and parliament elected by its people in accordance with Afghan constitution. Afghanistan has its own governmental structures, security forces, civil society. Those are indisputable achievements.

Naturally, we hear many voices of dissatisfaction and clearly, a lot remains to be done. We shall be realistic in our expectations, though. Ten years is not enough to complete restoration of one depleted and destroyed country - either for international community or for its own people. All achievements are very fragile, often sustained only with extreme difficulties.

The Czech Republic believes that only a long-term engagement of international community, effective endeavour and political will of both sides opens the way ahead. We are ready to support the development and capacity building of Afghanistan beyond 2014. Last month the Czech Republic initiated a discussion between our two countries on a bilateral development partnership. We are ready to continue our engagement in building Afghan national security forces should there be an international framework for that.

Speaking of our nearest future, we may see obstacles to deal with. We have to bear in mind that the handover of the security responsibility will severely impact our development activities in areas heavily relying on the work of our PRTs.

PRTs will be phased out. But this process should be well elaborated and carefully managed. Especially in those areas, where security is deteriorating and there are none or very few development agencies present. Naturally, the capacity of provincial governments is still limited, yet the gap in development assistance provided to local population will need to be mitigated. It will be very difficult if not impossible though for the NGOs or development agencies to start their work immediately in the areas where they had not worked for years before.

We should live up to our shared responsibility and find ways of how to ensure that the assistance provided to population continues, not to weaken its trust and also not to lose all results achieved so far.

If we wish to succeed in Afghanistan, we have to honour our mutual commitments. The international community has to continue to support Afghanistan financially and provide all necessary technical assistance.

Meanwhile, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan need to show its strong commitment to undertake further steps in the democratic process, such as strengthening and improving of electoral process before upcoming elections and continue building of the justice system. Its strong commitment to fight corruption and addressing the issue of narcotics are also essential for the international community to be able to increase its support. The tasks that lay ahead of us are enormous, but I am convinced that if we all work together to achieve the goals we set for ourselves today, we will succeed.