

SPEECH BY H.E MR. M.BOLD, MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF MONGOLIA,
AT THE AFGHANISTAN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Bonn, 5 December 2011

Your Excellency President Khamid Karzai,
Your Excellency Chancellor Angela Merkel,
Your Excellency General Secretary Ban Ki Moon,
Your Excellencies Foreign Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality rendered by the Government of Germany and the Government of Afghanistan. It's a great pleasure to join you here today and address this Conference.

We all acknowledge that secure and prosperous Afghanistan is indispensable not only to the security, stability, and cooperation for development in the region but also to that of the world. Ten years ago, members of the international community embarked on the road of rebuilding Afghanistan from the ruins of war and to lay the foundations of a free, pluralistic and democratic society. In this effort, we have achieved enormous progress. Mongolia congratulates the people of Afghanistan for its enthusiasm for, and commends the International Security Assistance Force for their valuable efforts and support to the future of Afghanistan.

However, there are enormous challenges that lay ahead to build up stable, democratic, modern Afghanistan. The challenges could be overcome by hard-work, persistence, and efficiency on the part of Afghan people as well as the continued international efforts. I want to stress the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan's successful development even after transition is vital in this crucial time of transition. It is clear now that to achieve the most fervent desire of the Afghan people, which is to live in peace and security, members of international community in collaboration with Afghanistan should focus on ensuring the steady implementation and realization of the transition and reconciliation processes and furthering regional cooperation. Needless to say, the success of the transition and transformation processes depends on devotion of the Afghan people, as well as on the continued support by the international community.

These issues are all on the agenda of the Conference. Marking the 10th anniversary of the historically important first Bonn Conference on Afghanistan, this conference will keep the legacy and serve as event for reaffirming its commitment to meeting the challenges ahead of Afghanistan's long-term stability and prosperity.

In consonance with the draft outcome of this Conference, Mongolia welcomes the successful process of transferring security responsibility to the Afghan authorities and strongly endorses the idea of renewing long-term commitment by the international community to support Afghanistan beyond 2014.

Mongolia's commitment to Afghanistan forms part of a joint effort by the international community led by the UN. Since 2003, Mongolia has engaged itself in ANA development program and assistance efforts to restore security in Afghanistan. Within the framework of agreements with NATO in 2010, Mongolia became the 45th troop-contributing nation. While supporting the 2014 troop withdrawal dateline, Mongolia is working to double its troop numbers in Afghanistan as stated by the President of Mongolia at the 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit. At present, approximately 370 Mongolian troops are deployed at six different locations in Afghanistan.

In order to capitalize on the international forces achievements and to seize the opportunities that came along, a comprehensive approach - which encompasses economic transition, national reconciliation, and capacity building - needs to be adopted. The Government of Afghanistan is working hard on this. It needs help as well. The Government of Mongolia considers that capacity building of Afghanistan's civil service is essential in a country where limited capacity continues to be one of critical challenges to development and stability. To that end we are planning to organize a training program for Afghan diplomats next year in Mongolia with support from the OSCE and other partners.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere wishes that today's Conference brings forth shared vision and commitment for consolidating Afghanistan as a stable and democratic country with a prospering economy.

Thank you for your attention.