

New Zealand Statement to the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan

Thank you, Mr Chairman, let me first express New Zealand's appreciation to you and to our generous hosts Germany for holding this gathering that is critical to the future of Afghanistan.

New Zealand has contributed to the international effort in Afghanistan from the beginning. We continue to do our part.

As leader of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan, New Zealand has had responsibility for security in one of the first full provinces to be handed back to Afghan control. So far, the transition process has been going well, with the Afghan National Police now having lead responsibility for security in over 70% of the province. Under the leadership of Governor Sarabi, the local Afghan authorities in Bamyan are taking the opportunities that transition offers to assume responsibility for their own affairs.

We work in Bamyan as a team, with the other contributors to the PRT, with the non-governmental organisations in the province and, of course, with the Afghan authorities. The New Zealand aid programme supports economic development; health and education; and community safety and justice. A key focus, in response to Afghan priorities, is on bringing electricity to Bamyan township and Nayak, through renewable energy.

With provincial governments assuming greater responsibilities, it is important that central government supports the provinces by providing adequate resources, delegating authority to those on the ground, and ensuring merit-based appointment to the machinery of government. The New Zealand delegation appreciates the commitments in this area which Afghanistan is making today here in Bonn.