

**Statement by  
Mr. Xiaoyu Zhao  
Vice-President  
Asian Development Bank**

**at the  
International Afghanistan Conference**

**5 December 2011  
Bonn, Germany**

Excellencies, Foreign Ministers, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, we are at an important juncture in Afghanistan's reconstruction. How the international community supports Afghanistan's current and future challenges will be a major determinant of the country's path towards peace and prosperity.

Since 2001, ADB has provided \$2.6 billion of development assistance to Afghanistan. Infrastructure and regional cooperation are at the core of our strategy and program and we believe crucial for Afghanistan's future economic prospects. The regional agenda is embedded in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (or CAREC) and Afghanistan is an active member of CAREC since it started 10 years ago. The regional dimension in the work that we do in Afghanistan has shown impressive results.

First, ADB assistance of \$1.3 billion to the transport sector is improving connectivity. The northern ring road and links to neighboring countries, the north-south corridor, the Kabul to Jalalabad expressway, the Hairatan to Mazar-e-Sharif railway are some examples. Travel times in the northern ring road have been reduced by more than half, and trade has increased ten-fold. Second, investments of close to half a billion US dollars in regional power transmission and distribution, reforms and capacity development has helped dramatically improve power supply in Kabul and other cities. As the secretariat, we are coordinating TAPI or the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline project. Third, the nearly \$300 million provided for irrigation and water resource management is improving the reliability of irrigation systems and increasing productivity and people's incomes.

ADB's assistance to the Roshan Cellular company helped enable the first private sector intervention of its kind in recent Afghan history. From only 158,000 cell phone subscribers in 2004, Roshan's subscriber base now covers 60% of the population in 230 cities and towns across the country. Moreover, Roshan's innovative services such as telemedicine, mobile trade and mobile money transfer have helped improve lives and livelihoods, and empowered women.

Sustained development financing is critical to Afghanistan's reconstruction and for ADB to continue its work. ADB is presently holding its Asian Development Fund XI (ADF XI) replenishment meetings in Dhaka and I would encourage the ADF donors to continue supporting this special fund as Afghanistan is the major grant recipient. The ADB's Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund is also another vehicle to pool and leverage resources through cofinancing with private sector and other development partners.

We have come a long way in our partnership with the Afghan government and people. And, we must continue to walk with them on this difficult journey to help ensure a brighter and better future for Afghanistan.

Thank you very much.

Word count: 431 words (or approximately 4 mins)