

**STATEMENT MADE BY H.E. AHMET DAVUTOGLU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, AT THE INTERNATIONAL  
AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCE (BONN, 5 DECEMBER 2011)**

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H.E. President Karzai,  
Dear Minister Rassoul,  
Dear Minister Westerwelle,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference, which we are holding at this critical juncture in the contemporary history of Afghanistan, is very instrumental for us to determine what the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the International Community will strive to do for the future of the people of Afghanistan, beyond taking stock of what has already been achieved in the last decade. This is especially relevant, as a new decade approaches, in which the Afghan people will be in full charge of their future. The draft conference document eloquently describes this as the transformation decade. Therefore, I would like to thank Afghanistan and Germany for organizing this significant event.

Since 2001, Afghanistan has attained undeniable progress in numerous fields affecting the lives of its citizens. However, the immense challenges which are still ahead of us demand that all Afghans and their friends in the International Community continue to strengthen their solidarity into the future.

The number of representatives gathered from over 100 countries and organizations today is a testimony to the International Community's continued commitment to Afghanistan. This meeting indeed gives us an auspicious ground for reaffirming the commitment required for the future of Afghanistan, mutually by the Afghans and the International Community well beyond 2014.

Turkey's commitment to Afghanistan is for the long-term. The solidarity between the Turkish and Afghan peoples has a very long history. Today, Turkey conducts the most comprehensive assistance program of its history, in Afghanistan. We are committed to stand by our Afghan brothers and sisters as long as they want us to do so.

Mr. President,  
Dear Colleagues,

Regional cooperation constitutes an indispensable pillar of the comprehensive efforts of the International Community aimed at addressing the challenges facing Afghanistan and beyond. Forming the very heart of Asia, Afghanistan is a country whose present and future is inseparably bound with those of its neighbourhood.

Upon the request of Afghanistan, and believing that it was time to further the shared vision and principles of cooperation enshrined in the 'İstanbul Statement on Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia' adopted in January 2010 to a new level, Turkey hosted the İstanbul Conference for Afghanistan last month which convened the immediate and near neighbours of Afghanistan and its major supporters from around the world.

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At the İstanbul Conference, regional countries gave a very strong message of commitment to a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan in a secure, stable and prosperous region. The region not only gave a strong message of commitment but also made it clear that it will own, lead and develop the efforts for enhanced cooperation by adopting the 'İstanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan'. I am pleased that the International Community also strongly supported the regionally owned and led İstanbul Process.

The İstanbul Process was initiated to strengthen regional security and cooperation through a basic set of applicable principles and a non-exhaustive list of confidence building measures. We see the İstanbul Process as complementing existing regional efforts and believe that it will create synergies with such efforts.

Dear Colleagues,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to pay tribute to the late Prof. Burhaneddin Rabbani, former President and Chairman of the High Peace Council, who continued his efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan until last breath. We firmly believe that lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan can only be possible through unity and reconciliation among the Afghans. The peace and reconciliation process should continue to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. Based on the requests of Afghanistan, the International Community should give its full support to this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The İstanbul Conference for Afghanistan brought together Afghanistan's immediate and near neighbors and the Bonn Conference today the wider International Community. I wholeheartedly believe that these two Conferences, although separate, complement each other in contributing to the endeavor of the Afghan people for a peaceful and prosperous future.

I would like to convey to the people of Afghanistan a clear message from both of these conferences: We will always stand by you.

Thank you.