

15 November 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand  
at the International Afghanistan Conference, Bonn, 5 December 2011  
Delivered by Ambassador of Thailand to the Federal Republic of Germany**

Excellencies,

I would like to take the floor to deliver the statement of His Excellency Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, who is unable to participate in this important meeting due to his engagement in the national ceremony to celebrate His Majesty the King's 84<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary, which falls on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December.

BEGIN

Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,  
Excellency Dr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,  
Excellency Dr. Guido Westerwelle, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,

I am pleased to learn that this important meeting is made possible by the active collaboration between the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

For the past 30 years, the world has seen the sufferings and difficulties of the Afghan people through the continuing instability in Afghanistan. These situations have not only caused misery and casualties to the lives and properties but also suspended the development of a potentially wealthy country. Ordinary people have been deprived of basic human needs. Poverty, hunger, and insufficient public healthcare became widespread in Afghanistan. I am, therefore, pleased that this meeting is organized to mobilize support from the international community to help develop Afghanistan.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,

Thailand has long enjoyed diplomatic relations with Afghanistan since 1953. The relations, however, have been strengthened during the past 9 years. Thailand has introduced and operated the alternative development project in Afghanistan with the cooperation from the Government of Belgium and Denmark since 2006. Based on the successful model of the royal development projects initiated by His Majesty the King, the project, which is now in its sixth year of implementation, is designed to raise the ownership of sheep for the rural Afghan people to enable them to replace the income from narcotic crop cultivation. The project has substantially reduced the areas of narcotic crop cultivation, alleviated poverty and provided better livelihood opportunities to the Afghan people.

Thailand has also extended bilateral technical cooperation to Afghanistan on an annual basis since 2007. Forty-seven Annual International Training Courses have been so far provided to the Afghan officials in the areas where Thailand has expertise, namely, managing a competitive export business, communicable disease's control, sustainable crop production, integrated watershed management, natural resource management, hospitality and tourism management, higher education management, narcotic suppression, animal disease control, poverty reduction, and rural development. Ten fellowships have also been tailored to Afghan students to study at universities and higher education institutions in Thailand in different fields.

Recently, in September, Thailand sent a public health mission to survey healthcare needs of Malalai Hospital in Kabul in the areas of maternal and child health care, family planning and midwifery. The Thai delegation also donated anti-rabies vaccine to the Afghan Public Health Ministry.

Despite the worst flooding in Thailand this year, Thailand will stand side by side with Afghanistan and remain committed to extend technical cooperation to help Afghanistan's development both on a bilateral and trilateral basis.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives

I wish to reaffirm Thailand's support to the Government of Afghanistan under President Hamid Karzai in pursuing a peaceful path of national development. I believe this is a critical transition for Afghanistan's future.

I urge all participating countries in the International Afghanistan Conference to render their full support and remain committed to Afghanistan in this important task.

On my last note, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the International Afghanistan Conference a great success. I hope that the Conference will initiate the enhanced collective cooperation to respond to the urgent need of the Afghan people and to ensure the sustainable development and long-lasting stability and security of Afghanistan.

Thank you.

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