

The statement as delivered by the Slovakian State Secretary Milan Ježovica

Mr. President,

Slovakia joins those who have thanked Foreign Minister Westerwelle and appreciated Germany's initiative to convene today's conference.

We believe that we can look back at the decade which has elapsed since 2001 with pride and hope for the future. With pride for what we have jointly achieved. Indeed, from being an exporter of threat and harm, Afghanistan is rightfully taking its place of a responsible member of the international community. And we can also look with hope - because step by step, Afghanistan is taking its destiny into its own hands. And we applaud that.

Slovakia appreciates the progress in the transition with a belief that this transition will be steady and non-reversible. It will require a continued building of strong, effective and accountable Afghan institutions as well as further demonstrable progress in the fields of governance and economic development. Reconciliation will not be easy, but it is a must on the road to long-term stability, and the best hope for sustainable peace and progress in Afghanistan. We condemn the murder of prof. Rabbani and salute his undeterred efforts in the peace process.

Yes, it is true that the work is not finished in Afghanistan and we are fully aware that further international support is needed to guarantee the viability of Afghan institutions until and beyond 2014.

Slovakia supports the processes of transition and stabilization in Afghanistan, including continued activities of the NATO and the EU in Afghanistan. Slovakia has stood closely with the Afghan people since the very beginning of the past decade. Our commitment has been unwavering. This year, at a time of budget cuts and consolidation of public finances, we have witnessed our widest ISAF contribution so far.

Of course, we underline that the success in Afghanistan is impossible without strong commitment, specific measures and clear results from Afghanistan's side. As Afghanistan takes more responsibility for its security and for the administration of public affairs we will adapt our contribution. Thus, our national military engagement will focus on training and supporting Afghan national security forces. As the civilian aspects of progress in Afghanistan get an increasingly prominent role, our moderated military contribution will be coupled with a civilian effort and continued development assistance.

Today, as we see Afghanistan rising from the darkness of the horrors of the war more and more into the light of strengthened responsibility, we wish Afghanistan the security that its people deserve and the prosperity that they strive for.