

## Departamento de Seguridad Internacional y Defensa

### NATO

#### Statement on Afghanistan

#### by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Nations participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

The future of Afghanistan and the stability of the region are directly linked to the security of our own countries, our own citizens and the wider international community; Afghanistan must never again become a safe haven for terrorism. For this clear reason, and to contribute to a better future for the Afghan people, today we – the Foreign Ministers of the 43 countries participating, at the request of the Afghan government, in the UN-mandated NATO-led ISAF operation – reconfirm the commitment of ISAF nations to help build lasting security and stability in Afghanistan, which remains the Alliance's key priority.

We recognise the urgency of the challenge and we welcome the opportunity to work with the new Afghan government. We will therefore accelerate our efforts in support of the Afghan people and government. Our goal is to help Afghans to take over full responsibility and ownership as soon as possible for the security of their own country. Increasing Afghanistan's lead role across the board remains our primary objective.

The past months have been particularly challenging. Afghan and ISAF forces alike, have suffered significant numbers of casualties. The Afghan people have also suffered great loss. We pay tribute to every sacrifice made and extend our condolences. We remain convinced that this mission is essential, and that our overall strategy, agreed at the Bucharest Summit, is the right one. To implement our strategy as effectively as possible and in the light of changing circumstances on the ground, we have agreed to make changes to our approach as set out below. As part of this, the ISAF operation will have, as a priority, the protection of the Afghan people, building Afghan security capacity and facilitating governance and development.

The transition to Afghan lead on security is an objective we share with the Afghan government. We will urgently step up our efforts to empower the Afghan authorities and help them take over further security responsibilities. The transfer of lead security responsibility in Kabul was a first step and further transfers will happen as conditions across the country allow. We are therefore investing more in training, equipping and sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces, through the NATO Training Mission, to build Afghan capacity. Our mission will be accomplished when Afghan forces can secure their own country; the Training Mission and donations to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund will help bring that day closer.