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Excellency,

On 31 March 2009, we will meet at The Hague on the occasion of the “International Conference on Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Strategy in a Regional Context.” As co-chair of the conference, I would like to share with you my views on the basic purpose of our meeting.

First, unlike the Paris conference last June, the conference in The Hague is not a pledging conference. It is a political manifestation of our determination to inject new vigour in our common efforts to support the people of Afghanistan and to work more closely with one another and with regional neighbours to accomplish our mission.

Second, I would suggest that the statements at the conference are forward-looking and focused on what we should do rather than what we have done. This means supporting recent positive trends as well as addressing key challenges with renewed energy.

Third, I propose to focus the discussion on the following elements: (i) elections and the need to strengthen governance and institution building; (ii) priorities for economic growth and development; (iii) meeting current requirements in the security sector; and (iv) how to better make use of the significant regional potential in many aspects of our common effort.

As you are aware, a chairman’s statement will be issued at the end of the conference. This statement will primarily cover the themes outlined above and pay particular attention to fresh approaches that emerge from our discussions and that strengthen our common efforts under Afghan leadership. With my co-chairs, I look forward to seeing you in The Hague.

Most sincerely,



Kai Eide  
Special Representative of the United Nations  
Secretary-General for Afghanistan