EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR’S KEY MESSAGES ON AFGHANISTAN
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I. Key Messages

1. Afghans are facing an uncertain future, despite improvements in education, health care and political participation over the past decade. The departure of foreign troops will reduce economic activity, state revenues and foreign aid, putting the development gains of the last decade at risk and exacerbating humanitarian needs in one of the poorest countries in the world. I welcome the commitment to support civilians made by the international community at the Tokyo conference on 8 July, and call on all concerned to translate words into deeds to ensure that the basic needs of Afghans are met.

2. Afghanistan is in its fourth decade of conflict. More than a third of Afghans have personal experience of fleeing their homes because of insecurity and violence. Nearly half a million Afghans are internally displaced, some living in utter destitution in urban slums where dozens of children died of cold last winter. I welcome the Government’s commitment to developing a policy on displacement and call for immediate action to find lasting solutions for the plight of displaced people.

3. Five million Afghans are refugees and migrants outside their country’s borders, mainly in Iran and Pakistan. In light of increasing calls by host country Governments for the speedy return of Afghans, I urge everyone involved in this process to manage it through voluntary repatriation in a safe, dignified and coordinated way. I encourage donors to support the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees agreed by host countries, Afghanistan and UNHCR in May.

4. Afghanistan is highly prone to natural disasters including earthquakes and landslides. So far this year, more than 200,000 Afghans have been affected by some 300 natural disasters. Humanitarian agencies need to build the capacity of the Afghan Government and the local authorities who are the first line of response, to prevent and prepare for these events and to minimize loss of life.

5. The Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan for 2012 calls for US$448 million to implement 165 projects across the country. Half way through the year, it is only 30 per cent funded. I count on all to help mobilize resources for those in acute need.