

## International Assistance to Afghanistan

### Statement of ASEAN to the 1st DRAFT

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations appreciates mostly the efforts of the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and would like to express thanks for initiating the discussion and organizing the conference on Development Aid for Afghanistan. We fully encourage the attempts to respond to the challenges connected to the current situation in Afghanistan and are willing to participate in discussions leading to proposals of solutions of the status quo. We hope to reach conclusions and come to common understanding being acceptable, beneficial and enriching for the region concerned as well as for all parties involved.

ASEAN considers the proposal of the 21st century to keep **Internal Security and Stability** to be one of a rational measure. As a one of the key stones, which constitutes the base of the Political Security Community of ASEAN is the goal of being dynamic and outward looking region in an integrated and interdependent world, we would welcome the idea of Afghanistan to be a stable and secure neighbour in the Asian region. Although there exist no close cooperation between ASEAN and Afghanistan, Association suggests rather supporting way of rebuilding the country. As long as among our fundamental principles belong mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations, we consider implying foreign ways of running a country and foreign ideas for rebuilding Afghanistan as inappropriate. According to our view as a part of ASEAN Regional Forum, peacekeeping along with keeping the security should be achieved mainly through mutual dialogues and cooperation. Therefore we strongly believe *intelligence sharing and training* are the most significant part of this first task. As one of our fundamental principles is non-interference, neither external nor internal; therefore we find this principle being crucial also in the cooperation with other states. Furthermore, we would suggest working on confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy as essential ways of preventing conflicts in the country. As an Association, which shares common values with the state of Afghanistan, we are ready to provide them with the best practices, which proved to be essential in strengthening positions of the Member States.

**Educational system** represents one of the important topics when trying to re-establish a framework for development in a post-conflict country. As one of the main goals of ASEAN is to build a knowledge – based community, to improve quality on all levels, to strengthen the rights of women and children and last

but not least to create and strengthen the ASEAN identity, which should be promoted around the world, we see a possibility in cooperation with Afghanistan on a certain level. In 2005 ASEAN leaders set new directions for regional education and collaboration. Our system has undergone a complex of comprehensive changes. As we do not see any major obstacles in access to the educational system in ASEAN, there is certain opportunity to cooperate also in this field. As an advantage for both parties could be seen the partial affinity of cultures and religion, although we must stress the regional disparities and differences also within ASEAN.

**Civilian stability** ASEAN reckon for very significant point as we abide principles of the United Nations Charter. We consider as a stable solution to appeal to the government of Afghanistan to abide to basic principles of United Nations as they count to the Members of UN.

In **Economic development** we see a broader range of cooperation, as we are focusing since the establishment of ASEAN on economic development among the Member States. We also see a possibility of creating the FTAs in the future with more countries, where Afghanistan could be included, too.

We expect from the Forum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to present in the following discussions more concrete suggestions. We hope that suggestions made by ASEAN could serve as a basis for the next rounds. We strongly believe to reach an agreement and a common understanding with all parties involved.