2020 AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCE
23–24 NOVEMBER, GENEVA
PEACE, PROSPERITY AND SELF-RELIANCE

**Closing Statement by Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Finland Ville Skinnari**
**2020 Afghanistan Conference, Geneva, 24.11.2020**

Your Excellency President Ghani,
Fellow co-chairs,
Ministers and Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
The proud people of Afghanistan,

I would like to express my gratitude to the participating states on agreeing on a joint Political Communiqué and the Afghanistan Partnership Framework. These documents have been shared with all participating states in Geneva and can be found also on the Conference website. I also thank you for the generous pledges made today. These three outcomes of the conference send a strong message of continued international support to Afghanistan.

The **Political Communiqué** contains the shared vision of the international community on themes essential to Afghanistan. It reflects the start of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations. I am pleased that for the first time the international community has come together with a joint call for an immediate permanent and comprehensive cease-fire. This together with full respect for international humanitarian law is what the Afghan people want and urgently deserve.

Today, we have renewed our long-standing partnership to strengthen a sovereign, unified, democratic and peaceful Afghanistan. We envisage this outcome to be reached through an inclusive and meaningful peace process. Path to the end state will not be easy, but we are all committed to this.

The new aid architecture, the ***Afghanistan Partnership Framework,*** sets joint principles and priorities for the cooperation during the next four years. I am pleased that our cooperation is now firmly based on a shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality. A meaningful annual review will ensure progress and strengthen our efforts in key areas, such as anti-corruption.
Today we have expressed enduring commitment to Afghanistan for the critical period ahead up to 2024. The donors pledged some USD 3 billion for the first year of the

upcoming quadrennial, with annual commitments expected to stay in the same level year-on-year. This would amount to up to USD 12 billion during four years.

On behalf of the co-hosts let me express my deep gratitude for your valued contributions to this Conference. By your high-level participation in this plenary, generous aid pledges and tireless efforts in finalizing the outcome documents, you have made this Conference a success. Let me also thank all the side-event hosts and speakers for adding valuable substance to the proceedings.

I would especially like to thank the fellow co-chairs. Ministers Atmar and Arghandiwal, Special Representative Lyons and their teams; it has been a real pleasure to steer this process with you. I would also like to thank our own team, Special Envoy Taalas and his hard-working colleagues.

Let me also thank the Afghan civil society for their highly important input to the Conference. It is my firm hope that the message of their statement is heard and acted upon.

Afghanistan needs our long-standing support more than ever in preserving and building on the progress achieved in the past 19 years. I am convinced that the results of this Conference will take us a step closer to a peaceful, prosperous and self-reliant Afghanistan.

I thank you all for your participation.