



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

Finland's statement at the 2020 Afghanistan Conference by Ville Skinnari,  
Minister of Development Cooperation and International Trade

**Your Excellency President Ghani, Esteemed Ministers and distinguished members of international organizations and the civil society,**

Finland holds a double role today. We have the honor of co-hosting this conference. At the same time, we are here to pledge our own support to Afghanistan at this critical juncture.

The Afghan peace process offers a historic opportunity for Afghans to put an end to decades of war and violence. This opportunity must be seized. Only peace will allow Afghanistan to reach its full potential as a prospering country and fulfil Afghan people's immense will to develop it. All stakeholders must support efforts for peace and stability. Especially regional countries have an important role.

Finland calls for an immediate ceasefire. It is time to move forward.

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Finland has taken part in the international effort to stabilize and support development in Afghanistan during the past two decades. We have sent troops, police officers and experts. We have spoken for women's rights, girls' education and peace. We have financed school buildings, teachers and sanitation, but also development for the rule of law, security, and human rights. We have worked with the government, the international community and the Afghan civil society. We believe that together we make up the parts of an engine that drives development. Together, we have achieved a lot.

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I am optimistic that peace will prevail in Afghanistan.

What might peace in Afghanistan look like then? I hope it will look like access to justice, clean water, safe childhood. A democratic country free of violence, corruption, drug trafficking and terrorism. A self-reliant country with sustainable economy, prospering businesses and flourishing trade. I hope it will mean respect for human rights of all Afghans, regardless of ethnic or religious background or gender. Girls going to school. Women studying, working and making decisions as equal members of the society.

Finland believes this kind of peace can happen. The international community's political and financial support is needed to lay a solid foundation for peace. However, building blocks for sustainable peace and development are ultimately in the hands of Afghans themselves.

Finland will stand with Afghanistan. However, we underline that securing, investing in and building on the achievements of the past 19 years are key conditions for our sustained support. We fully support the new Afghanistan Partnership Framework and the joint communiqué to be adopted in this conference.

It is my pleasure to announce that Finland will increase its development assistance to Afghanistan. Our pledge will be 30 million Euros per year, totaling 120 million Euros for the next four years.

Thank you.