AITCHISON COLLEGE
MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE VI

United Nations Development Programme

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Topic A: Evaluation of Millennium Development Goals and accelerating progress on them in the developing world

Topic Area B: Development of Afghanistan post US withdrawal 2014

1.1 Background of the Committee

The United Nations Development Programme connects nations around the world with the overarching goal of improving quality of life by addressing the many components of sustainable and effective development: for instance, the reduction of poverty, democratic governance, crisis prevention and subsequent recovery, and environmental concerns. In addition, UNDP also works to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the goal to reduce poverty by 50 percent by the year 2015. UNDP offers valuable advice to many different types of nations and societies to more properly address an area's needs. UNDP gains knowledge by "partnering with people at all levels of society and seeks to build nations that can withstand crisis and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone" and is currently on the ground in 177 countries and territories.

1.2 History of the Committee

The United Nations Development Programme was established in November 1965 as a merger between the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and the United Nations Special Fund (UNSF). These two organizations were fully combined in 1971 with the goals of improving quality of life worldwide through increased UN technical assistance and focusing on underdeveloped countrie–s that were in need of economic and political improvement. UNDP headquarters are currently located in New York, but UNDP also works in over 170 countries, 166 of which have country offices where UNDP works with local governments to focus on challenges that are unique to a particular territory, government, and society.

The main function of UNDP is to bring expert knowledge and advice, as well as funding and training, to nations in need. Additionally, UNDP works on an international level to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), emphasizing issues such as poverty, women empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Thus, the power and influence of UNDP lie in its abilities to obtain and disseminate local and international perspectives; these methods allow it to gain knowledge and to build greater understanding of a wide variety of different nations, giving it the ability to address a large range of distinct and pressing issues.

Within the United Nations, UNDP serves as an executive board of the General Assembly (GA), with the Administrator of UNDP being an Under-Secretary-General of the UN. The Administrator, chosen by the Secretary-General and confirmed by the GA, serves for a term of four years.

1.3 Mandate of the Committee

United Nations Development Programme continues to base its activities on the fundamental values of the United Nations while learning from its past and leveraging its core competencies and unique capabilities. These capabilities include its dual role as a UN agency that delivers programming and coordinates the UN country office presence, extensive knowledge network, decentralized structure, and business model.

UNDP sponsors innovative pilot projects and locally-based development programmes. It provides countries with the know-how to access and manage national and international resources and it also works with countries and partners to strengthen their national response to HIV and AIDS. UNDP is the only UN development agency with a specific mandate to promote democratic governance. It supports governments to establish responsive and independent electoral, judicial and security institutions and methods that promote fair, inclusive elections and rule of law, with a special focus on women and marginalized groups.

UNDP's work in crisis prevention and recovery helps countries prevent armed conflict, alleviate the effects of natural disasters and build back better and stronger when crises happen.

UNDP incorporates peace-building initiatives into many of its poverty and democratic governance programmes and offers expert crisis advice to governments and communities on risk reduction.

UNDP is an important player in initiatives around the world that focus on forestry, energy access for the poor, desertification, biodiversity conservation, water and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

UNDP's business model provides the framework for its support to programme countries as they work to fulfil their national development strategies.

1.4 Introduction to Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations Millennium Campaign, started in 2002, supports and inspires people from around the world to take action in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Project was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people. In 2005, the independent advisory body headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, presented its final recommendations to the Secretary-General in a synthesis volume "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.

Governments, foundations, businesses and civil society groups rallied around the call to action to slash poverty, hunger and disease by 2015, by announcing new commitments to

meet the Millennium Development Goals, at a high-level event at UN Headquarters on 25 September 2008. The gathering "exceeded our most optimistic expectations," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, noting that it generated an estimated $16 billion, including some $1.6 billion to bolster food security, more than $4.5 billion for education and $3 billion to combat malaria.

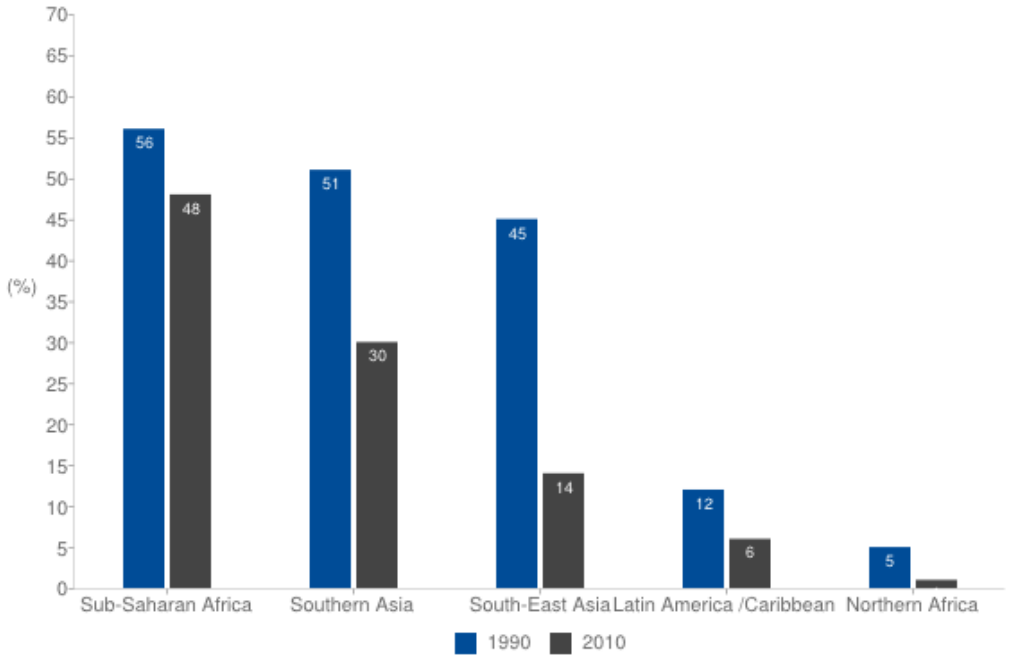
The 2010 MDG Summit concluded with the adoption of a global action plan – Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals – and the announcement of a number of initiatives against poverty, hunger and disease. In a major push to accelerate progress on women's and children's health, a number of Heads of State and Government from developed and developing countries, along with the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations, pledged over $40 billion in resources over the next five years.

On 25 September 2013, the President of the UN General Assembly hosted a special event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the Special Event towards achieving the MDGs, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented to Member States his report entitled "A Life of Dignity for All". In the outcome document adopted by Member States, world leaders renewed their commitment to meet the MDG's targets and agreed to hold a high-level Summit in September 2015 to adopt a new set of Goals building on the achievements of the MDGs.

1.4.1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The MDG target has been met, poverty rates have been halved between 1990 and 2010, but 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty.

Proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day, 1990 and 2010 (Percentage)

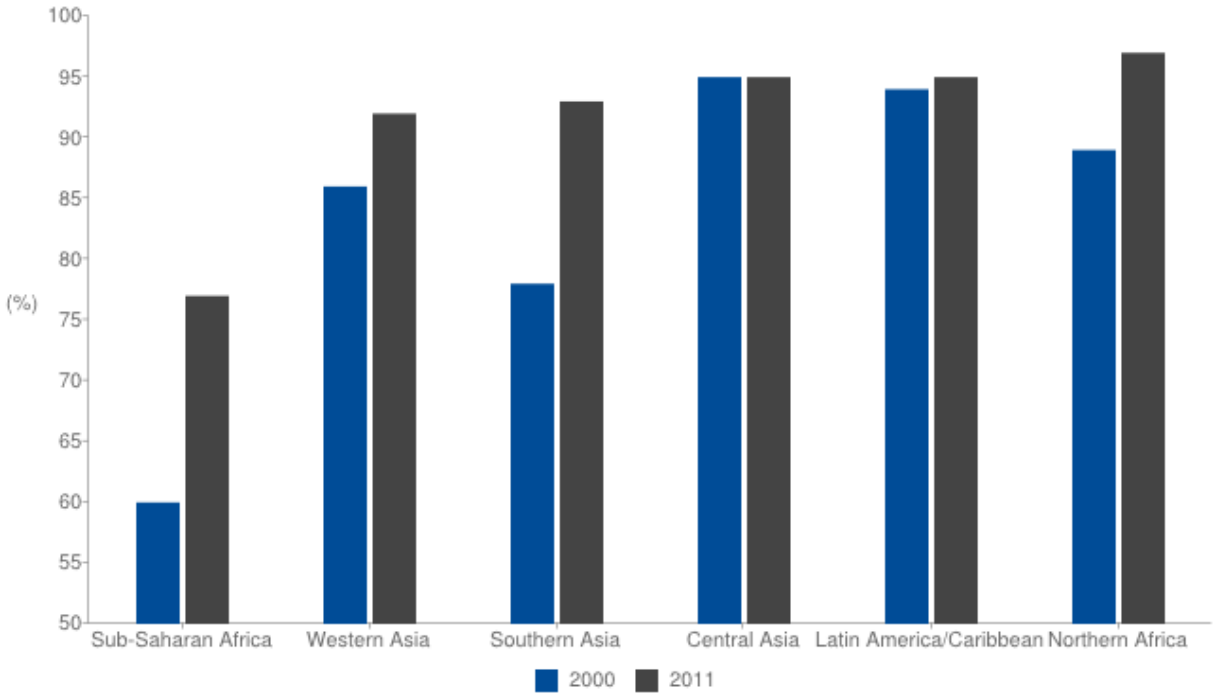


- About 700 million fewer people lived in conditions of extreme poverty in 2010 than in 1990.
- The economic and financial crisis has widened the global jobs gap by 67 million people.
- One in eight people still go to bed hungry, despite major progress.
- Globally, nearly one in six children under age five are underweight; one in four are stunted.
- An estimated 7 per cent of children under age five worldwide are now overweight, another aspect of malnutrition; one quarter of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.4.2 Achieve Universal Primary Education

Too many children are still denied their right to primary education, if current trends continue the world will not meet the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

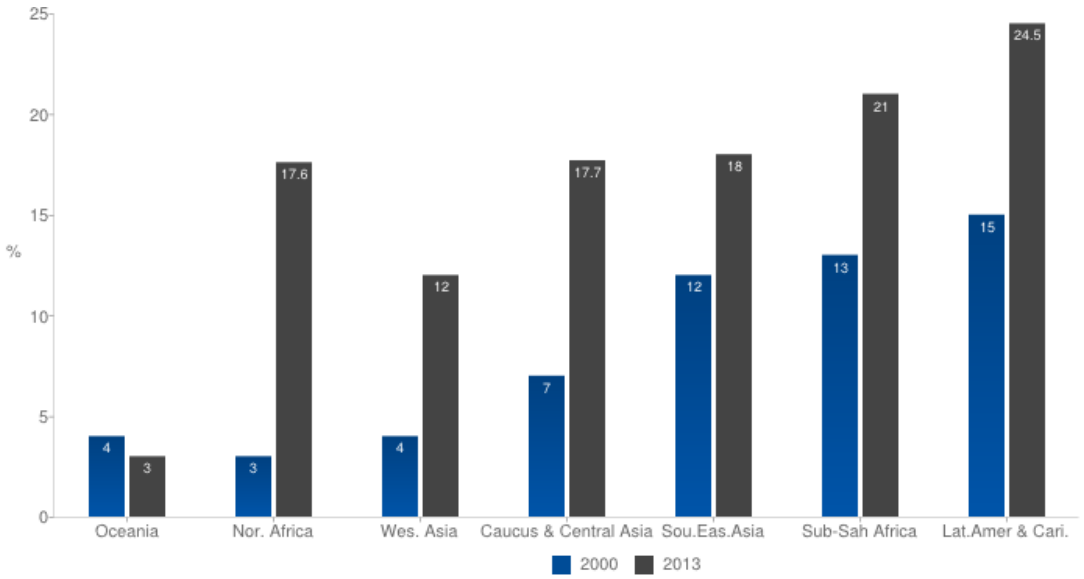
Adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education, 2000 and 2011 (Percentage).



- In 2011, 57 million children of primary school age were out of school, down from 102 million in 2000.
- More than half of these out-of school children live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Globally, 123 million youth (aged 15 to 24) lack basic reading and writing skills; 61 per cent of them are young women.

1.4.3 Promote gender equality and empower women

In many countries, gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government. For example, in every developing region, women tend to hold less secure jobs than men, with fewer social benefits. Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals. Poverty is a major barrier to secondary education, especially among older girls. Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment.

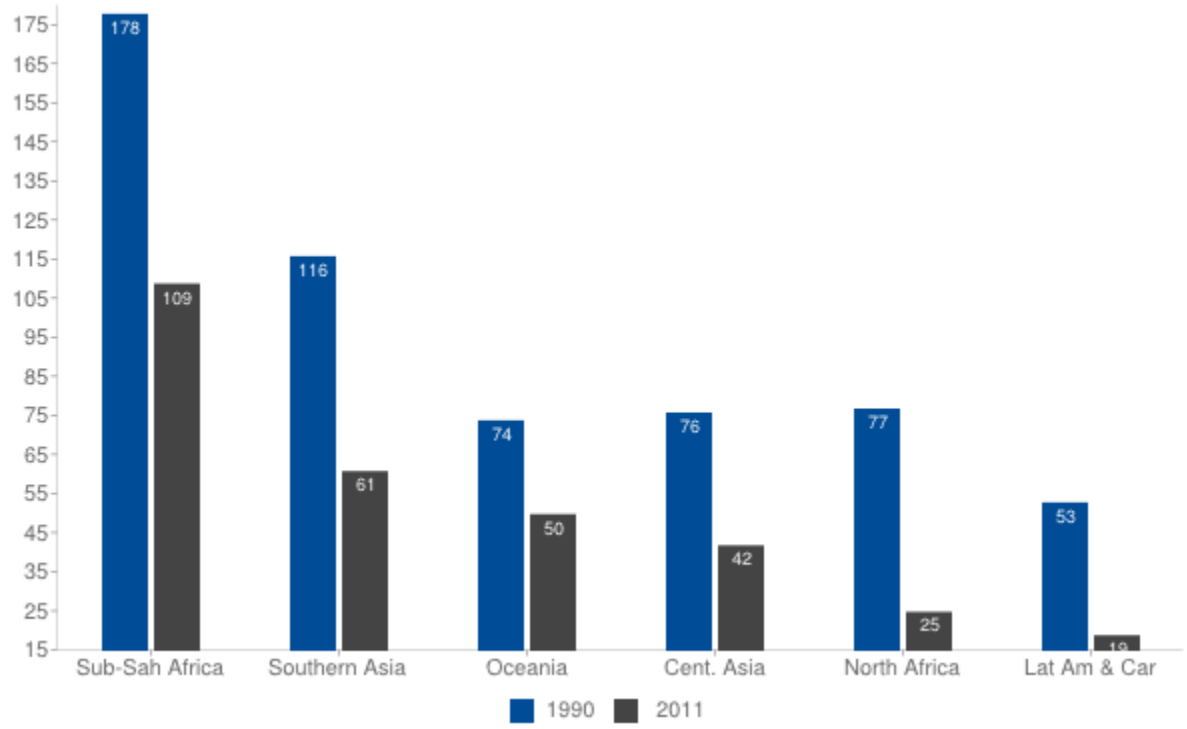


- Gender parity is closest to being achieved at the primary level; however, only 2 out of 130 countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.
- Globally, 40 out of 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector are held by women.
- As of 31 January 2013, the average share of women members in parliaments worldwide was just over 20 per cent.

1.4.4 Reduce child mortality

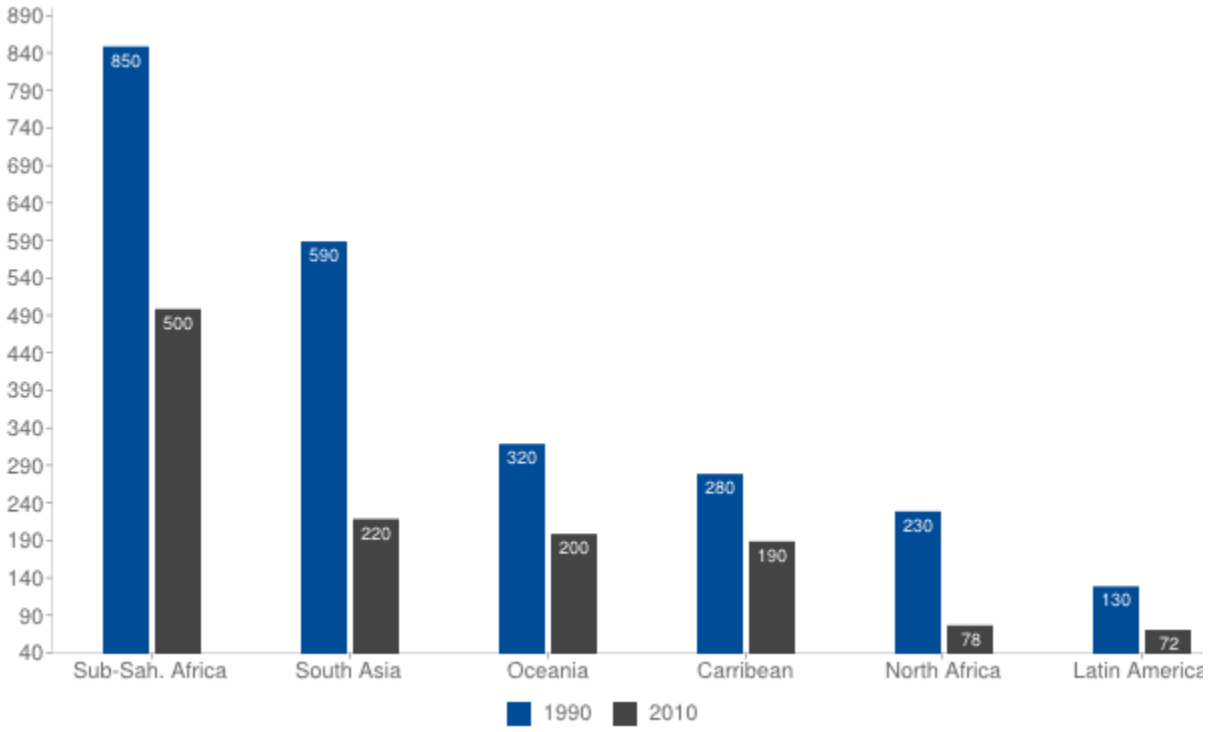
Big gains have been made in child survival, but efforts must be redoubled to meet the global target.
The target is to reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five years old mortality rate, from 93 children of every 1,000 dying to 31 of every 1,000.

Under- five mortality rate, 1990 and 2011 (Deaths per 1,000 live births).



1.4.5 Improve maternal health

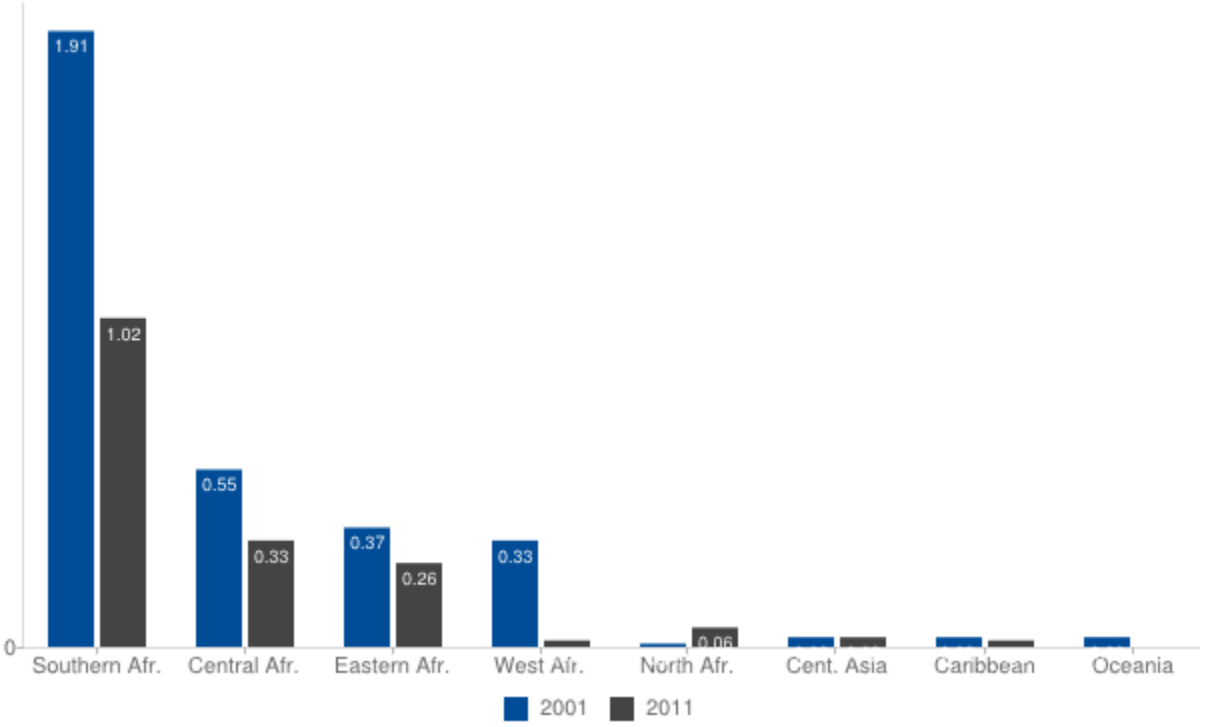
The targets for improving maternal health include reducing by three-fourths the maternal mortality ratio and achieve universal access to reproductive health. Poverty and lack of education perpetuate high adolescent birth rates. Inadequate funding for family planning is a major failure in fulfilling commitments to improving women's reproductive health. Maternal mortality has nearly halved since 1990. An estimated 287,000 maternal deaths occurred in 2010 worldwide, a decline of 47 per cent from 1990. All regions have made progress but accelerated interventions are required in order meet the target.



- In Eastern Asia, Northern Africa and Southern Asia, maternal mortality has declined by around two thirds.
- Only half of pregnant women in developing regions receive the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits.
- Some 140 million women worldwide who are married or in union say they would like to delay or avoid pregnancy, but are not using contraception.

1.4.6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

New HIV infections continue to decline in most regions.
More people than ever are living with HIV due to fewer AIDS-related deaths and the continued large number of new infections with 2.5 million people are newly infected each year.
More orphaned children are now in school due to expanded efforts to mitigate the impact of AIDS.
The global estimated incidence of malaria has decreased by 17 per cent since 2000, and malaria-specific mortality rates by 25 per cent.



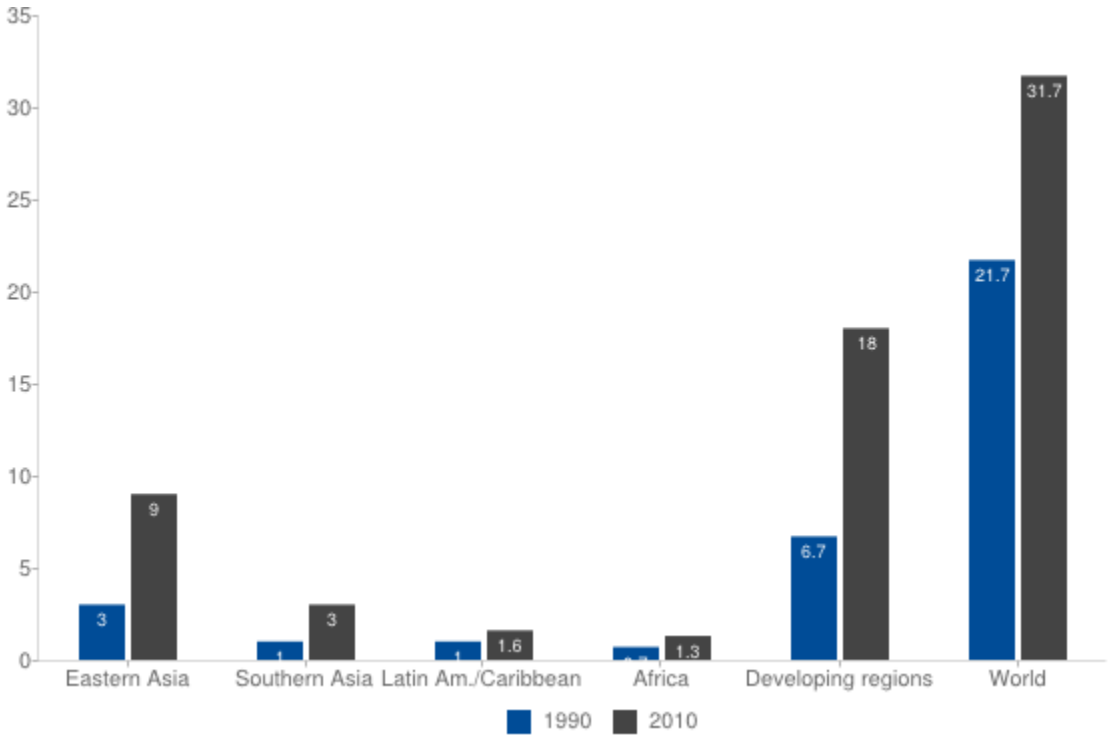
- In 2011, 230,000 fewer children under age 15 were infected with HIV than in 2001.
- Eight million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV at the end of 2011.
- In the decade since 2000, 1.1 million deaths from malaria were averted.
- Treatment for tuberculosis has saved some 20 million lives between 1995 and 2011.

1.4.7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Global greenhouse gas emissions resume their upward path, confirming the need for bold action.

Forests are a safety net for the poor, but they continue to disappear at an alarming rate.

Emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2), 1990 and 2010 (Billions of metric tonnes)



Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990.

Nearly one third of marine fish stocks have been overexploited.

Many species are at risk of extinction, despite an increase in protected areas.

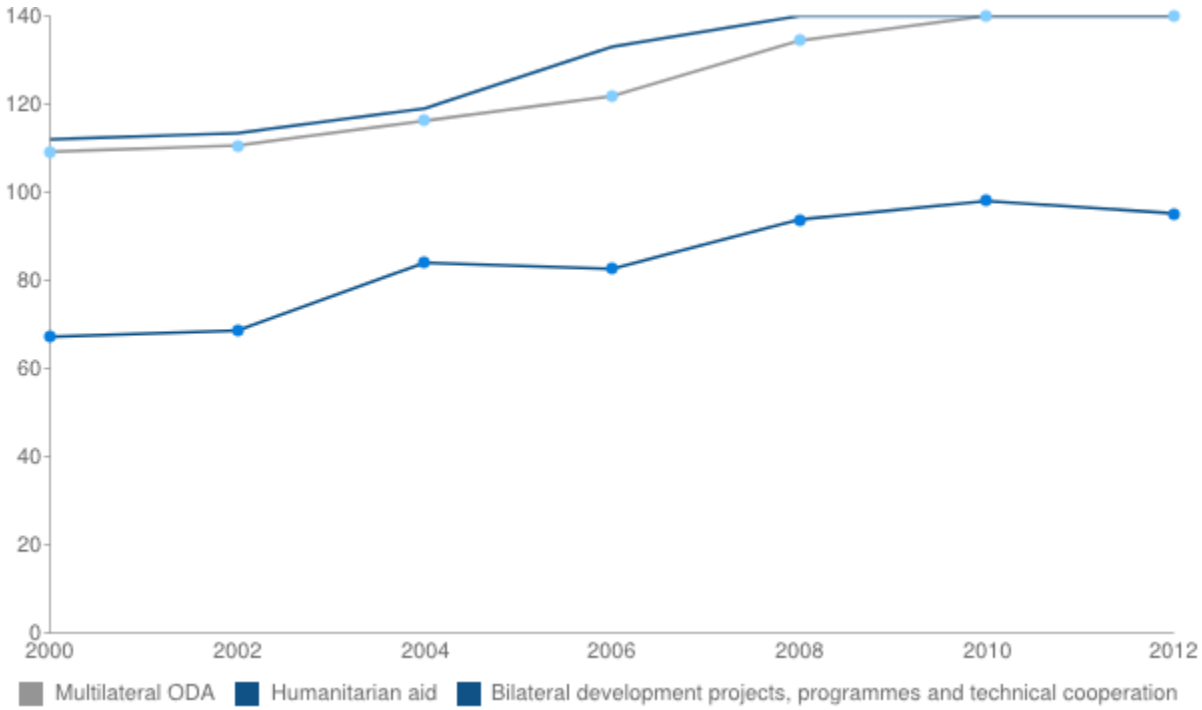
More than 2.1 billion people and almost 1.9 billion people, respectively, have gained access to improved water sources and sanitation facilities since 1990.

An estimated 863 million people reside in slums in the developing world.

1.4.8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development

There is less aid money overall, with the poorest countries most adversely affected.

Official development assistance from developed countries, 2000-2012 (current US$ billions)



1.5 Developing Countries

Developing country is a term generally used to describe a nation with a low level of material well-being (not to be confused with third world countries). Since no single definition of the term *developed country* is recognized internationally, the levels of development may vary widely within so-called developing countries. Some developing countries have high average standards of living.

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, defined a developed country as follows. "A developed country is one that allows all its citizens to enjoy a free and healthy life in a safe environment."

Criteria for what is not a developed country can be obtained by inverting the factors that define a developed country:

- people have lower life expectancy
- people have less education
- people have less money (income)

According to the classification from International Monetary Fund (IMF) before April 2004, all countries of Central and Eastern Europe (including Central European countries that still belongs to the "Eastern Europe Group" in the UN institutions) as well as the former Soviet

Union (USSR) countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) and Mongolia, were not included under either developed or developing regions, but rather were referred to as "countries in transition"; however they are now widely regarded (in the international reports) as "developing countries".

The development of a country is measured with statistical indexes such as income per capita (per person) (gross domestic product), life expectancy, the rate of literacy (ignoring reading addiction), et cetera. The UN has developed the Human Development Index (HDI), a compound indicator of the above statistics, to gauge the level of human development for countries where data is available.

Developing countries are, in general, countries that have not achieved a significant degree of industrialization relative to their populations, and have, in most cases, a medium to low standard of living. There is a strong association between low income and high population growth.

The terms utilized when discussing developing countries refer to the intent and to the constructs of those who utilize these terms. Other terms sometimes used are less developed countries (LDCs), least economically developed countries (LEDCs), "underdeveloped nations" or Third World nations, and "non-industrialized nations". Conversely, developed countries, most economically developed countries (MEDCs), First World nations and "industrialized nations" are the opposite end of the spectrum.

1.6 MDG Reports

The following summaries of region-wise MDG reports illustrate the success on the Millennium Development Goals in different regions of the world:

A) Africa

Assessing progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals concludes that while Africa is the world's second fastest growing region, its rate of poverty reduction is insufficient to reach the target of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

An analysis of food insecurity – the report's theme – provides insights into how this phenomenon impacts other MDGs, particularly health-related goals, and how concerted efforts to improve agriculture, food distribution and nutrition would fast-track

progress towards other MDGs.

The report reveals that climate-related shocks manifested by extreme weather conditions have destroyed livelihoods and exacerbated Africa's food insecurity, resulting in a high incidence of underweight children, widespread hunger and poor dietary consumption patterns.

With fewer than 1,000 days until the 2015 target for the MDGs, the report takes stock of Africa's overall performance on the MDGs and identifies the best performing countries by indicator, based on progress relative to each country's initial conditions.

Globally in 2012, 15 of the 20 countries which made the greatest progress on the MDGs were from Africa. Countries such as Benin, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Malawi and Rwanda are making impressive progress on a number of goals and targets.

The report concludes it is imperative that countries continue to learn from one another, as the countries that have sustained, equitable growth, with political stability and human development-oriented policies, are doing well in most of the goals.

It assesses four goals as "on track" and four as "off track":

- On track: MDG 2 – Achieve universal primary education; MDG 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women; MDG 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases; and MDG 8 – Global partnership for development.

- Off track: MDG 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; MDG 4 – Reduce child mortality; MDG 5 – Improve maternal health; and MDG 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability. Yet, some countries recorded appreciable progress.

Importantly, the report argues that Africa must put structures in place to sustain its development well beyond the MDG timeline.

B) Arab States

The Arab region has made impressive progress towards some MDGs. But achievements are uneven.

The region lags behind on some important targets, particularly those related to combating hunger. Political, social and economic transitions since 2010 have had significant impacts, including halting or reversing MDG gains in some countries of the region. Least Developed Countries (LDCs) remain behind on important targets, particularly those related to nutrition, food security, access to water and sanitation, and child and maternal mortality.

Extreme poverty is low in the Arab region, but the 2015 target is unlikely to be met.

Around 85 percent of children of primary school age went to school in 1999, and that rate rose to 92 per cent in 2011.

Despite women's strong participation in political demonstrations in some countries in transition, there have been no successful efforts to systematically ensure a greater legislative representation of women.

Three out of the four sub-regions have achieved or are close to achieving the target of reducing the under-five mortality rate by two thirds.

Antenatal care coverage is improving across the region, but progress is marginal in LDCs. Efforts are being made to increase the coverage of HIV treatment, nevertheless it is still insufficient.

Access to safe water markedly differs between urban and rural areas across the region.

C) Asia and the Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region has made big gains in reducing poverty and is moving fast towards other development goals, but still has high levels of hunger as well as child and maternal mortality, says the report.

The region has also achieved some other MDG indicators ahead of the target year of 2015. These include promoting gender equality in education, reducing HIV prevalence, stopping the spread of tuberculosis, increasing forest cover, reducing consumption of ozone-depleting substances and halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.

However, while strong economic dynamism has driven regional success in poverty reduction, even fast growing countries continue to lose shocking numbers of children before their fifth birthday and thousands of mothers die unnecessarily while giving birth, reveals the report. Over 3 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2010 alone.

The report reveals striking disparities between and within sub regions, countries and even social groups in their progress towards MDGs. While South Asia as a whole is on track for just nine MDG indicators, Sri Lanka is on track for 15 indicators and outperforms the sub-region.

Within countries disparities between men and women, between social and ethnic groups and between regions hold large sections of the population back from achieving the MDGs.

The report notes that many countries can speed up progress with just a little effort. Fourteen off-track Asia-Pacific countries need to accelerate progress by less than 2 percentage points annually to reach the target of halving the proportion of underweight children by 2015.

D) Europe and Central Asia

The Report on Achieving the MDGs in Europe and Central Asia documents the degree to which the eight goals based upon eighteen targets are on track to be fulfilled by 2015 in the Pan-European region. Generally the report finds that significant progress was being made in almost every area prior to the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, but the severe downturn during the crisis and sluggish recovery since 2009 has resulted in slower improvement. The crisis increased unemployment and poverty in much of the region and has significantly weakened government finances so that less is available for improving the educational and health infrastructure and in providing income maintenance for low income families. The deteriorating sovereign debt situation in the advanced economies has resulted in a scaling back of official development assistance which is desperately needed in much of the developing world to close the financing gap for achieving the targets. Unfortunately the economic outlook for the coming year for the UNECE region is quite subdued, and some of the goals may not be achieved without a more focused effort by our member States.

The report highlights that in the UNECE region poverty, hunger and lack of access to education and health care are not endemic to the general population as in much of the developing world, but are increasingly confined to marginalized groups including ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and migrants, persons with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, and in a few cases, women and girls more generally. Thus government policy should concentrate on creating more equitable societies with better designed policies for reaching these disadvantaged groups. There are some targets, especially in the environmental area, however, where the lack of progress is more widespread and there is a need for changes in policy and economy-wide activities; some of these goals remain unfulfilled even in the region's advanced economies.

E) Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress towards meeting the targets included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), but the recent global

crisis has cast doubts about the possibility of achieving them all by 2015, according to the report.

The region has progressed 85% in reaching the goal of halving extreme poverty (MDG 1). If it continues at this rate, Latin America could achieve this objective by 2015.

In education (MDG 2), Latin America and the Caribbean progressed significantly in terms of coverage and access. Most countries have registration rates close to or over 90%, similar to developed countries. However, there is still much to do in coverage and quality of high school education.

As for gender equality (MDG 3), the gaps with regard to men have diminished over the past 15 years, but the rate of progress has been slow. The report states that the three necessary pillars for attaining gender equality are economic independence, physical autonomy and participation in decision-making.

In relation to the right to health, expressed in MDGs 4,5 and 6, the health conditions of the population have no doubt improved, but progress is very unequal and heterogeneous, and with regard to some indicators, insufficient. For example, only a third of countries may be able to meet the goal of reducing infant mortality by 50%, given that regional progress in 2009 was 79%.

With regard to MDG 7 referring to environmental sustainability, the consumption of ozone-depleting substances has diminished, the surface of protected areas has increased over the past decade and coverage of potable water and sanitation services has improved. However, Latin America continues to have some of the highest deforestation rates in the world and carbon dioxide emissions have grown steadily.

Regarding MDG 8 on fomenting a global partnership for development, the region made significant progress in its international insertion between 2005 and 2009, although the international crisis caused its exports to drop drastically.

1.7 Developing an MDG Acceleration Framework

When the United Nations Development Programme convenes this September, the delegates will have to provide an acceleration framework to be implemented by countries in order to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals in their respective countries. The following guidelines should be followed while drafting an acceleration framework for the effective implementation of solutions and policies:

(1) Identification of the necessary interventions to achieve the MDG target;

(2) Identification of bottlenecks that impede the effectiveness of key interventions on the ground;

(3) Identification of high-impact and feasible solutions to prioritized bottlenecks; and

(4) Formulation of an action plan, with identified roles for all development partners, that will help realize the solutions.

B - Development of Afghanistan post US withdrawal 2014.

2.1 STATUS QUO:

The great uncertainties about the security and political transitions underway in Afghanistan and the country's economic outlook are likely to continue generating pervasive ambivalence in Washington, Kabul, and other capitals over how to manage the U.S. and ISAF withdrawals and their after-effects. Many Afghans fear that a civil war is coming after 2014; and outmigration and capital flight are intensifying. The security, political, and economic developments in 2014 and 2015 will be critically influenced by three factors: The first key determinant is whether Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are capable of functioning at least at the level of their 2013 performance while improving "tail" (e.g., logistical and specialty enablers) support and reducing casualty levels. The second factor is whether Afghanistan signs the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States, enabling a continued presence in Afghanistan of a small contingent of U.S. forces after 2014 and allowing other coalition countries to make similar commitments. The posture and mission of the U.S. and coalition deployments and international financial support for Afghanistan will also be of critical importance. Third, Afghan presidential elections in 2014 will deeply influence the political, security, and economic developments in Afghanistan for years to come. All three of these factors will also profoundly affect any future negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Moreover, Afghanistan's impending economic downturn will have both immediate and medium-term repercussions for Afghanistan's stability. Although a detailed discussion of external influences from neighboring countries and regional powers on Afghanistan's security and stability is not within the remit of this study guide, it nonetheless needs to be recognized that Afghanistan's regional environment will critically intensify or reduce internal conflicts within Afghanistan, helping to stabilize the country or fuel conflict dynamics.

2.2 What America has done up till now?

“Don't be foolish. America is still the lion of the jungle!"
This is what an Afghan commentator said dismissively about an article on the worldwide decline in US power. Better to be with the lion than tickle its tail, risking agitating the mighty beast. Given the Afghans' own history of violence, the idea that might naturally means right resonates with many. It explains why in 2001, Kabul's Taliban famously shaved off their beards while the rest looked up at "Uncle Bush" as their personal savior. Much has changed since then.

The stories that Afghans tell each other about America in this final year of the war reveal the US as bewildering and unfathomable. In the plot of current Afghan history, Uncle Sam variously turns up as the embodiment of evil and its polar opposite, a potential savior. The latest "deal" between the two countries will only add to that.

Like the rest of the world, Afghans interpret their experience with the US within the context of their own dominant narratives. The story of Afghan nationalism – a small Muslim nation under threat by foreign superpowers – still resonates with nationalist opinion leaders. They regard the US as the latest empire intent on destroying the Afghans' way of life. Often writing from the distance of exile, the authors of such tales face a serious question: how come the Afghan people defeated the Soviet Empire only to end up being occupied by America? To make sense of this departure from the "natural course" of Afghan history, the writers resort to conspiracy theories. The Afghans' own civil war fighters, the mujahedin of past decades and the Taliban of today, are depicted as mercenaries in the pay of Washington. In such stories, militant Islamism is seen as a US creation, 9/11 as the US government's own plot, and the war on terror as the US's agenda to stir up trouble among Muslims and weaken their resolve, making them recognize the state of Israel as legitimate.

When Israel is absent from the narrative, some Afghans turn to another conspiracy theory: the US is in Afghanistan because it wants to exploit natural resources. An Afghan student I met in California summed up this view through a summation of a recent phone call to his grandmother in Kabul. She told him that she had seen with her own eyes "American troops digging into the Afghan soil in search of precious minerals".

In such theories, we find echoes of the leftist critique of US imperialism that became popular among the Afghan intelligentsia and political activists of the 1960s and 70s. After all, what united the Afghan communists and their mujahedin nemesis was their ideological hostility towards the US. Even though both sides lost their legitimacy in the eyes of a majority of Afghans, their intellectual legacy of anti-Americanism in the guise of anti-imperialism has survived the turmoil.

If such paranoia distorts the perception of many ordinary Afghans, the political establishment itself seems equally susceptible to perceived threats. A key Afghan official, for example, told a TV station recently that "a group of patriots among the Taliban" had sent Kabul a word of warning. Apparently the US is plotting with Pakistan to fragment Afghanistan, offering the south and the east to the Taliban, therefore allowing Islamabad to run these regions through their Taliban proxy. Obama's awkward attempts at peacemaking by letting the Taliban open an office in Doha was thus perceived as an act of betrayal against its ally in Kabul as part of this broader scheme.

Not all Afghans subscribe to this view of the US as the enemy. Some opinion leaders see the US as a 'frenemy' – fickle, but owing to its sheer power, a vital partner for Afghans' survival. In such narratives, the US is seen as the lesser evil by comparison to Iran and Pakistan. There might be drones and civilian casualties, but unlike Islamabad, Washington does not sponsor terrorism on Afghan soil. Neither does it stir up Shia sectarianism, an accusation directed at Tehran. The US is seen as harmless by comparison to Afghans' dangerous Muslim neighbors.

In a sharp departure from such traditional views of the US, vocal members of ethnic minorities regard America as a potential savior. "Obama, I hate you!" was the line ending a poem by a young Hazara who felt let down by the US president for ignoring the plight of his people. The hatred echoes the disappointment of a man who once believed in the US's own ideal of universal justice.

In all this, America is seen as an outsider and catalyst: the proverbial cowboy that enters the town, dividing the locals into haters, admirers, and the undecided who keep their options

open. It's a plot-changer all right, but in the long story of Afghan history, perhaps only briefly so.

2.3 Development after withdrawal

The morale and calculations of the Taliban, the ANSF, the Afghan government and power elites, and the Afghan people will be critically influenced by whether the United States and Afghanistan sign the BSA and whether some U.S. and NATO forces remain in Afghanistan after 2014. Other ISAF countries have indicated that in the absence of a BSA and U.S. presence, they would not maintain their forces in Afghanistan after 2014.

Negotiations over the BSA dominated U.S.-Afghan diplomatic relations in 2013 and will continue to do so in 2014 until the BSA is either signed or Washington has lost patience and indeed adopts the so-called zero option, pulling the plug on Afghan stabilization. U.S. diplomats had hoped to conclude negotiations by October, but that timeline and subsequent ones have been repeatedly missed. Even though about 80% of the deal had been worked out, with the Afghan side mostly getting the language it wanted, three issues in particular confounded the negotiations. First, Afghan negotiators demanded U.S. guarantees against Pakistan's military interference in Afghanistan - potentially obligating the U.S. to attack Pakistan - which Washington has categorically refused. Second, Afghan negotiators sought to secure firm, specific, and multi-year financial aid commitments from the U.S., a request that violates the U.S. Constitution because the Congress allocates foreign aid on a yearly basis. Third, the U.S. appears to have compromised, though exactly how is not yet clear, on its key demand that U.S. counterterrorism units targeting al-Qaeda (not the Taliban) continue to operate independently after 2014. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has sought to channel these counterterrorism operations through the ANSF, with the U.S. providing intelligence only. A nonnegotiable U.S. requirement - and one of the greatest outstanding disagreements - pertains to the legal immunity of U.S. soldiers. The Afghans have sought to eliminate it while the U.S. categorically refuses to permit any of its soldiers to remain in Afghanistan in the absence of immunity guarantees. In late November 2013, when the U.S. believed all

disagreements had been ironed out, a loya jirga (grand council) of 3,000 Afghan public representatives, government officials, and tribal elders selected by President Karzai endorsed the BSA. Yet to the consternation of both U.S. diplomats and Afghan politicians and civil society, and to the applause of the Taliban, President Karzai still refused to sign the BSA, insisting that only the next Afghan administration to be elected in April 2014 should sign the deal. He also added new conditions for the U.S. to satisfy first – the end to all, including counterterrorist, air raids and house searches, substantial headway on peace negotiations with the Taliban, which he had unsuccessfully tried to initiate secretly on his own, and a U.S. guarantee that it would not "meddle" in Afghanistan's 2014 presidential elections. By this last demand, Karzai of course means that the United States and the international community not meddle with any of his meddling with the elections.

The difficulties in concluding the BSA reflect the steady deterioration since 2009 of the relationship between the Obama administration and Karzai, given their vastly divergent strategic viewpoints. Karzai wants the U.S. to bring far greater pressure on Islamabad to stop providing a safe haven in Pakistan for Afghan Taliban leadership and soldiers. Karzai fails to recognize that the resilience of the Afghan insurgency is also a function of the misgovernance, corruption, criminality, and abuse perpetrated by his government and associated local or regional powerbrokers. President Karzai's foreign policy of brinkmanship - constantly generating crises, and visibly shopping for new friends in Russia, China, Iran, and India to use as leverage against the U.S. and NATO - has depleted the fragile support left in the U.S. for the Afghanistan effort. Yet Karzai is wedded to the strategic belief that Washington cannot walk away because America requires a platform for pursuing a "New Great Game" in Central Asia against China and Russia. But the White House seems to have identified China and East Asia, not Central Asia, as its strategic priority despite being mired in the Middle East. Thus, influential members of the Obama administration increasingly regard Afghanistan as an unwise liability, and the U.S. president has repeatedly talked of "winding down" the war in Afghanistan, or more precisely U.S. participation in it. The Obama administration has repeatedly stressed that because of planning requirements for any post-2014 U.S. military deployment, it cannot wait to sign the BSA only after the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan (currently slated to take place in April) and until a new government is formed.4 Meanwhile, a number of U.S. and NATO officials have expressed

skepticism that President Karzai would sign the BSA before that, and the Afghan president himself has stated that the decision whether to sign or not would be made by his successor.

And yet waiting for the successor to sign will likely involve waiting considerably beyond April 2014. Even if the elections are not delayed for security or weather reasons, the first round is unlikely to produce a winner with over 50% of the vote. Claims of fraud, demands for recount, and political bargaining may delay the second round for several weeks or months. A similar contestation of the results, political bargaining, and delays could easily take place after the second round of the elections. Even once the winner is determined, he may require weeks to form a government. Thus, it is not at all inconceivable that a new Afghan president ready to sign the BSA might not be available until October or November 2014, and it is questionable whether either the United States or NATO partners will be willing to wait that long. A United Nations extension of the current ISAF mandate may buy time and delay the deadline for total U.S. and ISAF withdrawal for a few months until 2015, but it is not clear that either Washington or Kabul is ready to accept such an interim measure or that U.N. Security Council countries such as Russia and China would consent to such a temporary deal without an explicit agreement from the Afghan government.

Even if the BSA is ultimately signed, it remains unclear how many U.S. and ISAF soldiers would remain in Afghanistan after 2014. President Obama has repeatedly stated that any post-2014 U.S. mission would be confined to counterterrorism operations (potentially targeting al Qaeda and the Haqqani network only) and limited ANSF training and advisory assistance. Nonetheless, these two missions can take on a variety of configurations, and troop levels will primarily determine their precise shape. While former ISAF commanders and Afghanistan experts have called for between 15,000 and 20,000 NATO soldiers, increasingly it appears that 10,000 may be the maximum, with a U.S. deployment as small as 3,000-8,000 troops. Such a small force posture greatly limits potential missions, particularly if force protection requirements and anti-al-Qaeda units consume the bulk of the deployment. It thus no longer appears feasible for the ISAF, as previously planned, to continue to provide the ANSF with capabilities after 2014 that they lack now. Any post-2014 ISAF engagement with the ANSF may be limited to corps-level and ministry advising, oversight of external financing, and Afghan special operations forces support. The security

environment that the ANSF will face in 2014 and 2015 will thus be increasingly difficult. Moreover, to the extent that the dominant U.S. objective of retaining a U.S. military force in Afghanistan is counterterrorism - defined primarily as a capacity and bases for striking terrorist targets in Pakistan or reaching into Pakistan in case of a major security meltdown which threatened the safety of Pakistan's nuclear weapons -, Afghanistan will not get much out of such an arrangement. Although the deal might preserve critical financial flows to Afghanistan, it would not deliver a direct military advantage to the government. At the same time, it would continue to antagonize Pakistan and worsen the already difficult Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. U.S. counterterrorism forces and bases would likely come under attack and may become either sitting ducks or be drawn again into the Afghan internal insurgency struggles. Afghanistan might not thus welcome such a deal, and Washington might not be able to sustain it.

2.4 POVERTY REDUCTION

By tracing rural livelihoods of Afghan rural households, researchers of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit discovered that even though many of households have experienced improvements in access to basic services in the last decade, livelihood security has declined for the majority. Most households are poorer now than they were at the start of the decade.

Analyzing the approach to poverty in Afghan policy documents such as the Afghan National Development Strategy 2008, Paula Kantor and Adam Pain draw attention to the fact that whilst poverty reduction is clearly identified as the overarching aim, the focus is restricted to promoting GDP growth. The narrative is divorced from an understanding of how power and social inequalities help create and maintain poverty. The researchers express their concern about the fact that "These programs do not reflect the social complexities and power dynamics of Afghan rural life, and thus risk investing considerable human and financial resources in pursuit of objectives that are either undeliverable or fall far short of what is needed." Provision of economic opportunities through job creation and agricultural growth has overtaken poverty reduction and pro-poor growth as key aims, and analysis of how the

social and political context of Afghanistan might restrict the availability of such opportunities is missing.

One such example of this simplifying dynamic is a recently published World Bank study, which assesses the expected impact of the withdrawal of the international troops by 2014 on Afghanistan's economic and development fabric. The analysis of the poverty impacts of transition is limited to economic factors and allows no more than the conclusion that possible slower economic growth and the associated effects on employment can be expected to increase poverty.

As donor and government priorities shift in anticipation of the 2014 transition process, it is time for an urgent re-examination of poverty reduction strategy in Afghanistan. Kantor and Adam agree that agriculture and the rural non-farm economy can play a central role in promoting development in some of the world's poorer nations. However, they highlight the importance of reducing households' exposure to risk and enhancing social protection as part of efforts to enhance rural development and growth. They call for the application of a "concept of transformative social protection to highlight ways for protect peoples basic needs, prevent deprivation, promote improvement and transform the social structures and expectations that bar their path out of poverty".

The development community – from donors to government and non-government actors – is called to rethink current strategies for rural poverty reduction in Afghanistan. A "strategic and financial commitment to reprioritizing poverty reduction, and openness to acknowledging and addressing the underlying causes of inequality and social drivers of poverty" needs to be made in order to overcome the privileged position of the market in policy discourse and to carve out an equal space for interventions that mitigate risks and stabilize livelihoods.

2.5 Democratic Governance

There are many reasons why a liberal democratic political system has not been established since the U.S. invasion and overthrow of the Taliban regime in October 2001.

First, it is clear that the majority of the Afghan people wanted the return of the 1964 Constitution, which was established in a very open and democratic manner. But the U.S. government, backed by its allies, said no. Afghanistan had a constitutional parliamentary form of government; the new constitution, imposed on the people by the U.S. government and its allies, established a very strong, centralized presidential system of government.

Second, the U.S. government imposed Hamid Karzai on the Afghan people. They carefully chose the delegates to the original Bonn meeting in 2001. The five major democratic coalitions asked for representation, but the U.S. government said no. But the delegates chosen actually voted for Abdul Satar Sirat for interim president. He represented those who wanted a return to the constitutional monarchy. The U.S. government said no. The new interim president had to be Karzai, who had been a key agent for the U.S. government in transferring funds to the mujahideen during the civil war against the leftist government and their Soviet allies. No funds would go to Afghanistan unless Karzai was president.

2.6 Crisis Prevention & Recovery

Afghanistan is entering a new phase in its history. In 2014, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will leave and responsibility for the maintenance of security in the country will be handed over to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). How this new chapter will look is not clear because many factors determining the future of Afghanistan are still uncertain.

This paper does not aim to predict. Rather it provides six scenarios of how Afghanistan may look in the future. Afghanistan's future will not look exactly like any of them but is likely to include some features from some or all of them. As these scenarios aim to provide a 360-degree view of alternative futures, they cover the widest variety of potential futures, allowing policy makers to embrace uncertainty and be prepared for the different futures that may arise.

Scenarios are useful in policy planning processes. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, many policy makers are focused on a successful transition of security tasks and ignore

potential indications that not everything will go according to plan. Others are pessimistic and only focus on the future collapse of Afghanistan, which may not happen. Planning for the different possible futures increases organizations' flexibility as they have already thought through what they aim to achieve and what will be done in each scenario. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said, 'Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.' In order to contribute to this purpose, the scenarios need to be creative but plausible. They should be internally consistent and preferably make the reader think.

The aim of these Afghanistan scenarios is to provide input for the Netherlands government's Afghanistan policy. However, they also aspire to provide input for planning processes in other organizations. In addition, they aim to be a vehicle for discussing the future of Afghanistan. The current debate on Afghanistan is sometimes lost in dogmatic, one-dimensional or historical explanations. The future may be very different.

The scenarios

The scenarios are based on three key uncertainties:

1- Will governance in Afghanistan become relatively strong or relatively weak (effective and legitimate)?

2- Will governance in Afghanistan be heavily contested or mildly contested?

3-Will governance in Afghanistan be heavily contested or mildly contested?

These three key uncertainties are not phrased in absolute terms. It is not plausible that governance in Afghanistan will become strong and effective in the near future, and perceived to be legitimate by the whole of its population. Similarly, it is not deemed plausible, whatever form of governance is in place, that it will be uncontested. The term governance in the key uncertainties has been chosen over government because governance may not

necessarily be in the hands of a (single) government. In addition, governance does not necessarily describe the current Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), because a future government may be in the hands of a Taliban-style organisation. Last but not least, with the exception of the scenarios North-South Conflict and Emirate where the Taliban are united, or when they are portrayed by others as a unitary organisation, the Taliban is not referred to as a singular organisation. This might raise questions about whether the Taliban actually exists or about its homogeneity. What is clear is that a Taliban-style organisation may become dominant in the future.

On the basis of these three key uncertainties, a cube has been constructed in which each corner represents one scenario. Although this can produce up to eight scenarios, only six have been developed because, in general, while four to five scenarios help to clarify the discussion, more become confusing. Extra scenarios often do not add much and are sometimes not plausible. In this exercise the 'weak governance by a Taliban-style group', whether mildly or strongly contested, scenarios do not add much to the other six scenarios and have therefore not been developed. It has to be stressed though that, although four of the six scenarios describe relatively strong governance, this does not mean that strong governance is considered to be more likely.

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The time-setting horizon of the scenarios is 2017. This date has been chosen because it will take a few years for a scenario to fully develop after the departure of ISAF at the end of 2014. However, this does not make the scenarios less relevant for the immediate post-transition period in 2015. By that time the first traits of the scenarios will have developed and these can be monitored to potentially adjust policies.

The six scenarios are elaborated on below. Each starts with a future history of the period up to 2017. These are written in the past tense to emphasise that they are looking back from 2017. They are followed by a description of what Afghanistan looks like in each scenario in 2017 in the present tense. Each scenario ends with a short description of the recommended

policy instruments for that scenario. The paper ends with a conclusion on the main findings of the scenarios with regard to their important drivers and actors, as well as the wild cards. Following a reflection on the scenarios, advice is given on what policy options are the strongest and most robust for Afghanistan in general.

2.7 Women empowerment

- Afghanistan has the world's largest mortality rate: 1600 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- 60% to 80% of all marriages are enforced or are child marriages.
- 85.1% of women have received no formal education.

Afghanistan's commitment towards women's rights, and ensuring that the advancement of Afghan women in different fields can be sustained, will continue to be important sources of concern for the coming years, as will anxiety that the future leadership might compromise women's rights for the sake of political deals with conservative forces inside or outside the government. With the support of international donors, and under pressure from civil society and the media, the current government has managed (despite challenges) to make some improvements in different political, social and economic fields. However, there are serious concerns over the lack of balance between what the vast majority of women who live in rural areas are gaining from these achievements, and what the smaller numbers of urban-based women who are closer to the center get. Although Afghanistan's rural women have manifested a strong level of agency, neither they nor the programs and projects that were implemented such as National Solidarity Program (NSP) in their communities, have encouraged them to transcend their socially prescribed gender roles. This is mainly because Afghan women have learnt lessons from the past experience of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's (PDPA) radical approaches to changing society. A now prevalent approach by women, particularly in the rural context, has been to pursue gradual and moderate change rather than a radical transformation. Hence, while women are active and working, they continue their own ways of resistance under a strongly patriarchal system of norms and rules.

The parliament of Afghanistan on the other hand, has a mounting record of rejecting laws and bills that support women rights. It rejected the Elimination of Violence Against Women's Law (EVAW) in 2009 and in 2013. It resisted the idea of gendered budgeting when some of female MPs raised the question of how national budgeting would affect women across sectors. It has been locked in controversy over the issue of protection of women's shelters, calling them centers for immorality. Although part of the resistance by highly influential conservative members of parliament has to do with a dominant mentality in Afghan society that takes the subordination of women for granted, another part is mainly to do with the politics of relations between the president and the parliament. In other words, there is ongoing bargaining between the legislative and executive branches of government when ministers appointed by the president are not approved by the parliament, and when parliament uses its power to block laws intended to protect women that come to them through the Ministry of Justice. The question of women's rights serves as a bargaining chip in these cases, establishing their respective legitimizing agendas. Although the conservative MPs may not establish clear technical grounds for their refusal, they resort to invoking a particular version of Islamic interpretation to "prove" how "un-Islamic" these laws or bills or mechanisms are. Given that not all members of the parliament are well-informed and competent on the technical aspects of the laws, they follow the verdicts of the so -called "scholar" or the man whose appearance is more "Islamic", rather than hearing the voices of women or other MPs.

The overall effects of donor assistance on women's rights in Afghanistan have been quite problematic. At the heart of the problem is an interventionist approach, where not only the funding but also the soft-ware aspects of the planning are normative, and applied in a cut-and-paste fashion - overlooking the demands of the context in which they are applied. One example of such an approach is the facile assumption that has influenced international perceptions, namely portraying the Taliban as the sole enemy of women's rights in Afghanistan.

It has been proven repeatedly over the past decade that there are other conservative forces within the system who cannot tolerate the active presence of women in any sector. The

parliamentarian blockage of EVAW law, and the anti-safe house reactions by Ministry of Justice and other government officials are examples of this. Most of the programs and projects put in place have somehow ignored this reality, and have fallen into the trap of not seeing the enormous challenge that women's rights defenders and activists are facing, not only by being targeted, threatened or humiliated by the Taliban, but also by other forces who appear modern - being clean-shaven and in suits and ties - and who occupy seats in Afghanistan's parliament or other government positions. These men are as conservative as those whose appearance automatically singles them out as conservative and misogynist. This also suggests that a critical lesson could be learnt from the past decade: that it is necessary to address the mentality underlying the subordination of women as key to discrimination, rather than just accepting at face value the superficial jargon that some use to claim the extent of their "respect" for women's rights. The fact that gender equality was turned into a political slogan by the international donors and was used as justification for military intervention, meant that Afghan women on the ground were given less opportunity to take an active part in the formulation, design and implementation of the programs, and the gap was filled by those who might have had "technical" expertise in the field of gender, but lacked familiarity with the local context and its dynamics.

In summit is hugely problematic to connect the status of women's rights to the presence or absence of international security forces in Afghanistan. Such an assumption or understanding is tantamount to believing that the troops were here to 'liberate' Afghan women, which was certainly not the case. It can also be argued that the subordination of women and their discrimination is not the monopoly of one group who led Afghanistan between 1996-2001, such as the Taliban. It goes well beyond that since there are conservative forces within the current system who over the past decade have continued to jeopardize women's rights in the fields of legal reform, political participation and across governance sectors. As we move on to the next phase, while a real "zero option" is not so far seriously part of the agenda, the decrease of funding levels and political commitment by the international community certainly is. The question remains as to whether the main slogans such as "reform and continuity"; "moderation and equality", "reform and convergence" of the leading presidential contenders, carrying messages of continuity and preservation and protection of the achievements of the past decade, will go beyond empty promises. This will be crucial not only to sustain these

achievements, but also to take corrective action by addressing past failures. This can only be achieved by opening new spaces for Afghan women, as well as men, working for women's rights, to come together and take stock of the lessons learnt in order to ensure that the next phase is more inclusive of women across the country, in rural and urban areas, than it has been for the past decade.

2.8 Energy Prospects

There is also a strong relationship between per capita electricity consumption and human development, according to Nuclear Energy Institute. Therefore, with Afghanistan in the bottom 10% globally in electricity consumption per capita, the rehabilitation of energy infrastructure, including increased power generation, power transmission capacity and upgraded electric distribution grids, has been identified as a priority by the Afghan government and international donors, according to a 2012 report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The Energy Sector Strategy for Afghanistan, part of Afghanistan's National Development Strategy (ANDS), recognises that access to energy is a necessary condition for revitalising the Afghan economy weakened by decades of war, noting that "Energy is [Afghanistan's] top economic development priority, and its economy's hope," singling out electricity as "the motor that powers [Afghanistan's] growth." Economic growth is, in turn, at the heart of increased employment, poverty reduction, and overall social and political stability and security

Blighted by war, corruption and drug trafficking, Afghanistan is no ordinary terrain – even by the frontier standards of the global energy and mining industries.
But, with resource wealth estimated at $1 trillion (£620bn), the conflict-ravaged country has made the exploitation of its vast oil, gas and mineral reserves a centerpiece of any economic growth. The Amu-Darya basin region is one of four areas in the north of the country that the US Geological Survey and its Afghan counterpart jointly assessed to have between them 1.6 billion barrels of crude oil, 16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 500m barrels of natural gas liquids.
Most of the unexploited natural gas is located in the Amu Darya basin, while the crude is largely found in an area known as Afghan-Tajik.
That both areas have rich potential was clear to the Soviet Union as long ago as the 1950s – first as an investor and then as an occupying force between 1979 and 1989.

But commercial exploitation is fraught with problems as state-owned China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) - and local partner Watan Energy – is finding with two blocks in the Amu Darya basin. While in August this year drilling stopped again after a dispute over a transit contract with Uzbekistan to allow crude to be trucked to China halted work last year after CNPC engineers came under attack. Meanwhile, a trio awarded an exploration contract in November on six blocks in Afghan-Tajik – London-listed Dragon Oil, Kuwait Energy and Turkiye Petrolleri – are yet to sign. Stephen Carter, the Afghanistan campaign leader at Global Witness – an organization that investigates links between natural resources and conflict – said: "There is no major project that is really moving forward yet. I think it is going to be really hard to get any major investment to follow through. The risks are high, potential for conflict is high and the number of people you have to pay off is high."
On Transparency International rankings, Afghanistan is joint-bottom at 174th, alongside Somalia and North Korea.

According to a 2012 study entitled "Development and Application of an Approach to Optimize Renewable Energy Systems in Afghanistan", the frequent energy shortages and blackouts caused by insufficient or dilapidated infrastructure oblige Afghans to rely on electricity produced by costly diesel generators, which can only be used a few hours a day.

A New York Times article demonstrates the cost difference among various sources by noting that diesel fuel trucked into a war zone translates into operating costs of around forty cents (USD) per kilowatt-hour (kWh) 7, compared to six cents per kWh imported over transmission lines from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan or Tajikistan. Moreover, electricity generation cost from domestic sources, including hydro, gas and coal was less than three cents/kWh, according to DABM data from 2007. Yet more expensive electricity production from diesel power plants has almost tripled from 48 million kWh in 2009-2010 to 128 million kWh in 2011-2012, reported the Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-2012. Kandahar province and Kabul accounted for the vast majority of this consumption, with 102 million kWh and 12 million kWh, respectively, in 2011-2012. The increasing dependence on diesel fuel poses an issue considering that Afghanistan does not have an operating refinery and therefore has to import all petroleum products, notes ANSD. The Statistical Yearbook says Afghanistan consumed approximately 1,300,000 tons of state-supplied fuel in 2011-2012 including diesel, petrol and other fuels. Table 2 below sums up the main origin of Afghanistan's fuel imports.

2.9 Situation of Aghans

The withdrawal of the majority of International Security Assistance Force troops from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 is the third in a three part series on the changes that may be expected over the next year in Afghanistan.

The first posting in this three-part series suggested that the impacts on its citizens of the security, political and economic transitions in Afghanistan in 2014 have not yet received enough attention; and the second narrowed the focus specifically to displacement scenarios. Within those scenarios, there is a general consensus that the most likely and most significant displacement outcome of the transitions in Afghanistan in 2014 will be more displacement within the country.

Three specific drivers for an increase in internal displacement as a result of the transitions in Afghanistan have been identified. First, it has been suggested that if provincial cities were to 'fall' to insurgents, this would push out large numbers of people seen as loyal to the

government, specific political parties and the Afghan National Security Forces. A second risk factor is the rise of both old and new warlords and their militias. Internal turf battles, like those that plagued the country in the 1990s pre-Taliban era, would probably cause local displacement including in urban areas. Third, it has been predicted that if the current skirmishes that are common especially in the south and east of the country turn into more systematic armed clashes, then significant localized internal displacement would occur. In addition, a reduction in livelihoods and the capacity to cope with seasonal climatic events, may spur further displacement for a significant number of people affected by the expected economic deterioration over the next year.

Equally, three reasons have been suggested why such triggers are more likely to result in internal rather than cross-border displacement. First, there will be a reluctance to move too far from their homes, especially for the millions of returned refugees who have invested in a new life at home. Second, the possibility and inclination to move to either Iran or Pakistan may decrease over the coming years: it has been predicted that Iran would close its official border crossings quickly should significant new refugee flows from Afghanistan emerge next year. There are growing restrictions on refugees already present in both countries and deteriorating employment prospects. Third, for a significant proportion of Afghans, internal displacement has become a fairly common survival strategy, manifest particularly by short-term and short-distance moves to escape sporadic localized violence or on a seasonal basis by climatic effects.

While people are not expected to cross the borders in large numbers, there are at the same time concerns that insecurity may. A scenario currently being discussed in Pakistan, for example, is that rising conflict in eastern border areas of Afghanistan may spill across the border, and in particular affect the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Deteriorating security and law and order there may in turn lead to people leaving the province, thus increasing the internally displaced persons (IDP) population within Pakistan.

Any new internal displacement in Afghanistan would exacerbate an already fairly serious internal displacement crisis in Afghanistan. As of March 31, 2013, a total of 534,006 people were recorded by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) as internally displaced by

conflict in Afghanistan. These statistics combine conflict-induced and other displacements, as well as both relatively new and protracted caseloads. Internal displacement has already been rising over the past year, and is projected to continue to increase over at least the next 12 months. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, conflict in Afghanistan in 2012 and a further 32,000 displaced over 100,000 people by natural disasters. In the first six months of 2013 an additional 60,000 people were displaced internally, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Conditions for many IDPs are already described as tenuous. They are reported to face a wide range of physical threats and restrictions to their freedom of movement. They often lack access to sufficient food and water, adequate housing, security of tenure and employment. National and international responses to internal displacement in Afghanistan to date have been described as inadequate, and clearly would be stretched by further internal displacement over the coming years.

A particular aspect of internal displacement attracting attention in Afghanistan is its urban manifestation, particularly in Kabul. Increasing numbers of IDPs are moving to cities and towns, where they are co-settling with non-displaced urban poor, poor rural-urban internal migrants, and returning refugees. In Kabul there are 55 such informal settlements, housing about 31,000 individuals, and conditions are dire – especially with respect to shelter, access to water, hygiene and sanitation. While it is suggested that these urban IDPs may face discrimination and are even more deprived and marginalized than those among whom they are living, in reality it is difficult to draw distinctions.

A crucial first step in responding to the current internal displacement crisis in Afghanistan, and preparing for the prospect of more displacement, is to finalize the national IDP policy. During a working visit in July 2012 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, Chaloka Beyani, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government to support this process. A final draft has now been prepared and is scheduled to be submitted to parliament shortly. While Afghanistan will be a welcome addition to the growing list of countries that have developed national laws and policies on IDPs, experience in many others is that implementation remains a challenge. The obstacles that Afghanistan will likely face in

the implementation of this policy include be corruption, inadequately-trained staff, insufficient resources for implementation, absence of a specific governmental focal point for implementation, a lack of monitoring and evaluation, and poor take-up in provinces away from Kabul. In all these areas international support will be required if the national policy is to be effective.

While protecting and assisting IDPs remains primarily a national responsibility, there are other ways that the international community can support the process. One is to adopt a more innovative response to urban IDPs, who might more effectively be assisted as part of wider UN efforts within Afghanistan to deal with the challenges of urbanization and the urban poor. Similarly, there may be scope for partnerships outside the UN system, and in particular between UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration and with NGO partners, to try to deal comprehensively with the increasing overlap between displacement and other migration flows in Afghanistan through an approach that focuses on vulnerable mobile people.

Conclusion

- A residual U.S. presence would help provide U.S. troops a dignified exit from Afghanistan, but would offer no real long-term guarantee for the political future of the country.
- Even a limited U.S. presence is likely to be an element of relative cohesion for the government in Kabul, if not for the country as a whole.
- Pakistan is by far the most active regional player in Afghanistan and the one whose policies are likely to have the most destabilizing impact.
- Karzai currently insists on being the sole interlocutor with the insurgency, cutting out other stakeholders whose support is critical to the process's success.
- The risk that Afghanistan may again become a training ground for aspirant terrorists is very real.

In UNGA at ACMUN we will discuss the problems and undesired repercussions of the US withdrawal and come up with the most pragmatic procedure to deal with them effectively.

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