



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**Annual Security Review Conference 1 - 2 July 2008
Statement by Deputy Director General Anita Nergaard in Response to
SACEUR General John Craddock**

Mr. Chairman,

Norway thanks General John Craddock for his presentation of the challenges we are faced with in Afghanistan. Norway believes it is very valuable to have this exchange between NATO and the OSCE, especially at this moment in time when the OSCE is considering its role in relation to Afghanistan.

Norway has for quite some time advocated a step change in the civilian and political assistance to Afghanistan. Norway itself is stepping up significantly. We are increasing our assistance by nearly 40 per cent compared with last year, to a level of about EUR 100 million this year. And we intend to keep it at that level during the five-year time frame of the present Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

We also participate substantially in ISAF, where our efforts are concentrated in the Faryab province in the North where we lead a PRT.

Strengthened international coordination is an important element – and one where the UN must take a stronger role. We therefore welcome that the UN now has a more robust mandate and that world leaders have endorsed the new SRSG Kai Eide. I appreciate the support for the UN and the SRSG expressed by General Craddock just now.

As stressed by General Craddock, with regard to rule of law, reform of the police force is a key factor and an area where we see clear a demand for further assistance and where our efforts still have a way to go.

The OSCE has an important role to play, and Norway believes that the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan is a key decision from Madrid. The programme of activities presented by the Secretary General on 6 June contains a package of appropriate proposals aimed at strengthening border security and management in Afghanistan, fostering cross border co-operation between the Central Asian participating States and Afghanistan and enhancing law enforcement capacities.

We sincerely hope that the Permanent Council will adopt a decision before the summer break authorizing the Secretary General to proceed with the implementation of the programme of activities related to the OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. Norway stands ready to contribute to the implementation of that programme.

It is important to secure ownership by the Central Asian republics as well as by the Afghan authorities. We must make sure that OSCE activities add value and are in synergy with ongoing activities.

The UN has a coordinating role. We note that Afghan authorities and the UN have been consulted in preparing the OSCE programme, and we strongly recommend these consultations to continue and also with other relevant actors.

We also need to ensure the gender perspective in all activities.

We see a clear need for the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE and others to continue to work close together.

If we look ahead, it will be essential to ensure that the elections to be held in 2009 and 2010 are free and fair, and that democracy is consolidated for all Afghans. Norway believes the OSCE could play an important role in supporting election preparations and in observing the future elections in Afghanistan.

Norway looks forward to the OSCE - Afghanistan Conference in Kabul in November.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman