

**Statement of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-  
General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom  
At the Sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan  
(RECCA-6)  
Kabul, September 2015**

Minister, Excellences, Distinguished colleagues,

UNAMA is pleased to participate in the RECCA-6 conference today. This forum provides a valuable opportunity to highlight the salient topic of regional economic connectivity. This is in alignment with the connected drive we have seen from the government of Afghanistan for greater engagement with its neighbor and its emphasis on greater economic security cooperation.

Regional economic cooperation is vital for any sustainable economic development in Afghanistan. But this economic collaboration in turn requires a concerted effort towards involving its connectivity with its neighbors. The logic which should animate economic integration is a win-win, a mutually beneficial development for the region as a whole. As the economy grows and jobs and wealth are created, the impact will, indeed, reach beyond economic gains. As the benefits derived from increased economic development impact households, both in Afghanistan and its neighbors, it will contribute to increased political and social stability across the region. Investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure by its neighbors is not charity but self-interest, an investment in the region, and in each neighbor's stability and act for own prosperity and stability.

There are we have lead major infrastructure initiatives that are currently underway, both in the fields of energy and in dry goods trade. These include the CASA1000 electricity project and the TAPI gas transmission project. We acknowledge the progress that has been made on these and encourage the countries of the region, and the international community to facilitate the early completion of these initiatives. We also note proposed major North South and East to West road and rail corridors. For Afghanistan it will be important to ensure the development of its own infrastructure linking it to these major logistics corridors, to ensure that Afghanistan gains the maximum benefit from them, and we look to relevant stakeholders to support these linkages.

For real progress to be made on economic connectivity within the region, however, it will not be enough to simply develop the physical infrastructure, the "Hardware" as we see it. It will be necessary to further develop the "Software", to broaden transit trade framework agreements to facilitate the smooth movement of goods and increase the economic viability of inter and intra-regional trade. We, therefore, encourage the region and international stakeholders together to implement both the required physical infrastructure, as well as transit trade agreements and their custom harmonization.

On behalf of UNAMA, and the broader UN family in Afghanistan, I would like to thank the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan. We hope that this conference will help stimulate regional economic cooperation or the betterment of the lives of the people of Afghanistan and the people of the whole region, pledge our support to the goal.

Thank You.