

**Statement by Mr. Lee Kyung-chul, Special Representative for Afghanistan
and Pakistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
2020 Afghanistan Conference**

November 24, 2020

Honorable Co-Chairs,

Today, Afghanistan stands at a decisive juncture. The Republic of Korea has and will continue to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and development process. Lasting peace cannot be achieved without sustainable development and a reliable security mechanism. That is why my government has contributed over one billion US dollars to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and Afghan development efforts. Recently, gender equality has become a priority cross-cutting issue in the allocation of our resources for Afghanistan. Indeed, women's empowerment and capacity-building are at the center of many of our socio-economic assistance programs in Afghanistan.

Korea remains committed to financially supporting Afghanistan through 2024. Even in the midst of heavy fiscal constraints due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to do all we can to extend a helping hand to the Afghan people.

In this spirit, I am pleased to announce that the Korean government, for the year 2021, is planning to contribute 35 million US dollars to Afghanistan. The budget proposal is currently being reviewed by the Korean National Assembly.

The support of the international community is vital to the success of the Afghan peace process and reconstruction. However, it cannot be a substitute for the will and efforts of the Afghan people themselves. I would like to emphasize once again the importance of sustained efforts by the Afghan government to combat corruption and attain transparency and accountability.

Honorable Co-Chairs,

The international community has rallied around Afghanistan, recognizing the security and humanitarian implications beyond our respective national borders. So it is imperative that we not relent in our collective efforts on Afghanistan, as they benefit the Afghan people – and us all. Thank you. /End/