

**High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in
Afghanistan**

**Discours d'annonce de la contribution luxembourgeoise
prononcé par
le Ministre de la Coopération au développement et de l'action
humanitaire, M. Franz Fayot**

Genève, le 13 septembre 2021

Thank you Chair.

Mr. Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

Esteemed colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Afghanistan has been in protracted conflict for almost thirty-five years, which has heavily hindered poverty reduction and sustainable development, damaged the fabric of society and worn-out its coping mechanisms.

Today, the country is experiencing the compounding effects of conflict, drought, rampant unemployment, food insecurity and Covid-19. Almost

two thirds of the population live below the poverty line and more than three million children are undernourished.

The recent events have created additional stress and unpredictability to the country and the resilience of its population, rapidly increasing the number of displaced people.

Since 2001, international aid efforts have been considerably scaled up. Human development indicators show some improvement in absolute terms particularly over the last ten years. These achievements must be preserved.

For two decades, Luxembourg has been working with partners such as the ICRC, OCHA, UNHCR, the Worldbank, FAO, the PATRIP Foundation and a number of NGOs. Between 2001 and 2020, Luxembourg's cooperation has disbursed a total of 48 million euros in humanitarian and development aid in Afghanistan.

As a long-standing and reliable donor, Luxembourg stands ready to assist Afghanistan people at this critical juncture. As such, my government has decided to continue its financial support for humanitarian purposes in Afghanistan.

However, let me be clear: We cannot support this process at any cost. Our humanitarian support is tied to International Humanitarian Law and the respect of the humanitarian principles.

Negotiations must preserve and build on the political, economic and social achievements of the last 20 years. Oppression and discrimination threaten 19 million women and girls in Afghanistan: women's rights must be preserved and protected. I am convinced that meaningful participation, including that of women, will pave the way for a better, more sustainable outcome for all.

Today, Luxembourg pledges to stand by the people of Afghanistan with further humanitarian aid and support to development projects for a total amount of 3 million euro in 2021. While we are in the process of examining whether the projects supported so far can be sustained and to what extent we can step up our support next year, we will continue our close cooperation with our international partners, including the ICRC, UN agencies, NGOs, as well as with the Afghan people.

The people and Governments of Iran and Pakistan have generously hosted Afghans, some of which have spent over three decades in exile, and we are very grateful for their hospitality. We think that it is our moral duty to assist host communities in the region and Luxembourg will continue to share part of the burden.

The scale of the challenges Afghanistan is facing cannot be addressed by humanitarian agencies and assistance alone. There is a need for a collective and comprehensive effort on the part of our governments to engage in humanitarian negotiations to ensure that the people of Afghanistan have unimpeded access to life-saving assistance.

I thank you