



H.E. President Hamid Karzai's Inaugural Speech

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF INAUGURATION STATEMENT
BY H.E. HAMID KARZAI

[IN ARABIC]

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise Be to Allah, the Lord of All Worlds

And Peace and Prayers Be to the Last of God's Prophets

[IN PASHTO]

Dear compatriots,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased that this grand occasion has brought such a distinguished audience together. I welcome you all here.

On this historical day, many distinguished guests from countries around the world have joined us in Kabul. This is a testament to the sense of solidarity, cooperation and deepening relations between us, Afghans, and the international community. The people of Afghanistan cherish this friendship.

Today, as I take oath as Afghanistan's president, I reflect on the past three years – on ups and downs, on moments of both joy and gloom. During the past three years, I took encouragement and strength from our people – from the meetings I held several times a week with elders and youth, women and men, coming from the provinces; from the strong atmosphere of national unity at the two Loya Jirgas; from the love I found in this nation for progress and prosperity; from the resilience of those fellow Afghans who were determined to leave behind the suffering and oppression they once endured, and move forward to rebuild this great nation. Nothing makes me more hopeful to the future of this country – and my ability to serve it – than the incredible experience of our people's participation in the recent elections. So it is with God's blessing, and our people's support, that I resolve to fulfill this great responsibility that has been put on my shoulders today.

My brothers and sisters,

I have heard, over the past month or so, many extraordinary stories of the Afghan people's participation in the elections. Someone told me the story of an elderly woman in

Farah province who arrived at a polling station with two voter's cards. She went up to an election worker and declared that she wanted to vote twice, once for herself, and again for her daughter who, she said, was about to deliver her child and unable to come to the polling station to vote. "We are sorry, but no one can vote for another person, this is the rule", the elderly lady was told. So she voted – for herself – and left the station. Later in the day, the election worker was shocked to see the elderly women back, this time accompanying her young daughter to the polling station. Her daughter carried her newborn baby, as well as her voting card which she used to cast her vote.

Tens of other stories like this exist that I cannot tell you today. Each of these is remarkable and distinct, but they all tell one truth – the truth of the Afghan people's love for their country and concern for their future.

Every vote that was cast in the elections was a vote for Afghanistan, whether I received it or another candidate. Every voter had Afghanistan's best interests at heart. I thank all the voters who participated in the elections, and I respect their vote. I am confident, and proud, that this nation is determined to rebuild Afghanistan, and rebuild it fast; to live in security, and to stand on its own feet.

I and my colleagues in the new government feel deeply compelled, not only by your votes in the elections but also by your determination, to respect your aspirations and serve your goals. We will stand by the promises which we have made for the good of this nation. We will be steady and unflinching; we will invoke Allah the Almighty for His blessing, and will depend on you for courage and support.

[IN DARI]

During our election campaign, we presented a manifesto for the future to the people of Afghanistan. Our principal promises are concerning the strengthening of security sector and ensuring lasting stability throughout the country; the elimination of poppy cultivation and the fight against processing and trafficking of drugs; the disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants; the eradication of poverty, generation of wealth and the provision of public services especially to the rural areas; the rule of law, and the protection of civil liberties and human rights; the acceleration of administrative reform to strengthen administration, root out corruption, stop the abuse of public funds, and ensure meritocracy; the strengthening of national unity; the rebuilding and building of the country's infrastructure; and of course the strengthening of understanding and cooperation with the international community. We feel obliged to work to deliver on these promises, with the help of God the Almighty, over the next five years.

In addition to the above, a significant challenge facing us over the next few months is conducting parliamentary elections. Again with help of the Almighty, and participation of the people of Afghanistan, this challenge will also be overcome and parliamentary elections will be held on schedule, in a safe and free environment. The election of the

legislature will complete the establishment of the third branch of power in our state, paving the way for a law-abiding, progressive and prosperous Afghanistan

I and my colleagues have a duty before the people of Afghanistan to remain steady and persistent as we work to realise their aspirations. We have a duty before our people to deliver, to the best of our ability, an Afghanistan that is free, stable, prosperous and enjoying a dignified place in the family of nations.

Distinguished guests,

I must hasten to say that our fight against terrorism is not yet over, even though we have succeeded to reduce this common enemy of humanity to a lesser threat in this country. The relationship between terrorism and narcotics, and the continued threat of extremism in the region and the world at large, are a source of continued concern. A decisive victory over terrorism requires serious and continued cooperation at regional and international levels.

Three years ago, the firm and productive cooperation of the international cooperation rid Afghanistan from the rule of terrorism. The same cooperation has led to the rebuilding of the Afghan state, and significant progress in restoring peace, stability and security to our country. As a result, we have now left a hard and dark past behind us, and today we are opening a new chapter in our history, in a spirit of friendship with the international community.

May I take this opportunity to thank the United States of America for helping us so generously in so many different ways. I would also like to thank the United Nations, the European Union, Japan, Canada, some of our neighbours and many others. These countries have extended to us a helping hand when we needed it most. The help from the international community has taken us step by step over the past three years to where we are today. I thank them all for their generosity and friendship. And I am joined in this feeling of gratitude by all my fellow Afghans.

With our neighbours, Afghanistan has enjoyed an ever flourishing partnership and cooperation in trade, economic and other fields, over the past three years – thanks to the relative stability in Afghanistan and the region. A peaceful, strong and stable Afghanistan is in the interest of our neighbours and our region – I invite them to take maximum advantage of our trade and investment potential. I pledge that, mindful of our own national interests as well as theirs, we will remain a friend and a partner to all our neighbours.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last week, during a meeting with the elders of Badghis province, as I went around greeting the guests individually, I saw an elderly man who had tears in his eyes and said

to me as I shook his hand: “We want a clean and efficient government from you!” I would like all of you to leave this gathering today having heard one pledge from me: I will do everything it takes to turn that elderly man’s tears of hope into the smile of fulfillment.

Once again, my fellow Afghans, I congratulate you on this historical day, on your courage to bring this day about, and on this dawn of a new peaceful and prosperous era for our country.

[POEM]

*Oh God, make good the conclusion of our endeavour
Such that leads to your approval, and to our success*