

## Joint Statement by

Dr. Liam Fox, UK Minister of Defence,  
Gitte Lillelund Bech, Danish Minister of Defence and  
Mart Laar, Estonian Minister of Defence  
after their meeting in Kabul on 16 June 2011

### UK-Estonia-Denmark – Joint Statement

We are on the eve of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our joint mission in Southern Afghanistan. Over these five years the United Kingdom, Denmark and Estonia have worked side-by-side, adopting a comprehensive approach in our missions to make excellent progress in the region. Together, under the auspices of Task Force Helmand, and with the Afghan authorities and security forces, and other NATO allies - particularly the US - we have achieved significant results in improving the security in an area previously renowned as a Taliban stronghold. We remain committed to the ISAF campaign.

We continue to build upon these gains in order to ensure irreversible progress through developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), who have an essential role to play in providing both security and governance in Afghanistan. Building the capacity and capability of the ANSF will increasingly allow Afghanistan to take responsibility for her own long-term security and stability. As the NATO Secretary General said “Trainers are the Ticket to Transition”. We remain committed in our support to the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) led training mission and to wider capacity building in Afghanistan and will continue to support this effort through the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team.

These development efforts are paying dividends. We welcome the inclusion of Lashkar Gah in the first tranche of transition areas, in which we will continue to transfer lead security responsibility from ISAF to the ANSF this summer. The ANSF will be in the lead of security provision by the end of 2014 and though the nature of our forces might evolve during the Transition process, we must ensure that the mission is appropriately resourced, and a balance maintained between combat troops (to prepare the ground to allow the rest of central Helmand to enter Transition) and trainers (to further develop the ANSF). Transition will free up troops; members of ISAF who, due to transition in their areas, will be relieved from their combat tasks are encouraged to find ways to contribute their troops to regions where stability operations continue or find other means of engagement.

All three of our nations have a long term commitment to Afghanistan and, together as part of NATO, we are pressing ahead with planning how this will evolve through and beyond transition.