

Peace is impossible when half the population is excluded from negotiations, say Afghan women human rights activists

Ahead of the London Conference, women make strong recommendations for reconstruction and development

WHAT: Press Conference - Afghan Women Leaders' Priorities for Afghanistan Stabilization and Reconstruction

WHY: In the lead-up to the 28th January London Conference on Afghanistan hosted by the UK Government, four prominent Afghan women human rights defenders will release their recommendations on security and governance priorities for their country. These recommendations will provide the *only* concrete input from *consultation* with Afghan women into the key decisions affecting the future of their country that will be set in the London Conference. Afghan women have been too long neglected as key partners for conflict resolution, combating extremism and promoting social and economic revitalization. Yet, like never before they are mobilized to demand their place in defining the country's future. The statement by the four Afghan women will be representative of the views of a broad group of Afghan women civil society activists, who will meet on 24 January in Dubai. Their message: ***Women's rights and security are critical to achieving stability; to succeed the international community cannot postpone attention to their interests, expertise and needs.*** Women have a contribution to make to peace and good governance and the time to involve them in any negotiations and good governance reform is now.

The women's mission is sponsored by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and The Institute for Inclusive Security.

WHEN: Wednesday 27 January 11 am, Central Hall Westminster (John Tudor Room), Storey's Gate, London SW1H 9NH

WHO: Wazhma Frogh, Gender and Development Specialist and Recipient of the U.S. Department of State International Woman of Courage Award, 2009
Orzala Asraf, Founder and Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan
Mary Akrami, Director, Afghan Women Skills Development Center;
Selay Gaffar, Director, Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan;
Homa Sabri, National Officer-In-Charge, UNIFEM Afghanistan;
Anne Marie Goetz, Chief, Governance, Peace and Security Section, UNIFEM; and
Carla Koppell, Director, Institute for Inclusive Security

NOTE: ONE TO ONE INTERVIEWS ARE AVAILABLE 26-29 JANUARY

Media Contacts:

Claire Hoffman , Bartley Robbs Communications +44 7977 440 353 or +44 208 892 5215 or
claire.hoffman@bartley-robbs.co.uk

Oisika Chakrabarti, UNIFEM +1 347 449 2260 or oisika.chakrabarti@unifem.org

Mariam Mansury, Institute for Inclusive Security +1 202 257 0674 or mariam_mansury@huntalternatives.org

The Institute for Inclusive Security



###

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war. For more information, visit www.unifem.org. UNIFEM, 304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017. Tel: +1 212 906-6400. Fax: +1 212 906-6705.

For over a decade the Washington, DC based **Institute for Inclusive Security** has used research, training, and advocacy to promote the inclusion of all stakeholders, particularly women, in peace processes. We work with a global network of over 1,000 women leaders from more than 40 conflict regions. Our research gives policymakers new strategies to drive inclusion by examining tangible contributions of women peace builders. Our training provides leaders the skills and knowledge to direct local, national, and international peace-building. Our advocacy to high-level policymakers promotes change that makes peace processes more broad-based and sustainable.