

Afghanistan president's visit



Hopes and expectations: Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai speaks to Japanese media outlets in Kabul on July 3. KYODO

Karzai visits Japan for key global summit

Through July 10, Hamid Karzai, president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is on a working visit to Japan on the invitation of the Japanese government.

During his stay in Japan, Karzai will attend today's Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, hosted by Japan and Afghanistan. The president is also scheduled to hold a meeting with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda.

Prior to Karzai's visit to Japan, Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba visited Afghanistan, meeting with Karzai and Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul in January.

On June 26, Sadako Ogata, former president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency who now serves as an adviser on diplomatic policy to Genba, visited Afghanistan and exchanged views on the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan with Karzai dur-

ing a meeting in Kabul.

On July 3, Karzai was interviewed by members of Japanese media outlets in Kabul. He expressed his hope that an informal meeting in Kyoto at the end of June attended by representatives of the Taliban and his government would lead to formal peace talks and spoke about his expectations for the July 8 conference in Tokyo.

His first visit to Japan was on the occasion of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in January 2002. He participated in the conference as the chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration. Then he visited Japan in February 2003 as president of the Afghan Transitional Administration. Since he was first elected president of Afghanistan in December 2004, he has visited Japan in July 2006 and June 2010.

Afghanistan conference looks beyond 2014

Today, the international Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan will be held.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, the international community has continued its military, humanitarian and development support to Afghanistan to ensure its security.

Against this backdrop, the government of Japan has played a leading role in supporting Afghanistan's development through enhancing its independence, so as not to let the country return to being a hotbed of terrorism again by implementing such measures as the announcement of the Ogata Initiative — which includes seamless support from humanitarian assistance to that of restoration and reconstruction — and a comprehensive development plan focusing on priority areas. Other measures include the hosting of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan (Tokyo Conference) in 2002; efforts for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former soldiers; the disbandment to illegal armed groups (DIAG) and the reintegration of former Taliban soldiers; education and basic medical treatment; development of farms and infrastructural preparation.

At the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, Germany, held in December 2011, the 10-year period during which the transition from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the government of Afghanistan in order to maintain peace and security will be com-



World issue: (Front row, left to right) German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul take part in the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, Germany, on Dec. 5. AP

pleted (from 2015 to 2024) was defined as the Transformation Decade, and the international community committed to offer financial contributions toward economic development and security costs.

At the Meeting on Afghanistan held on the occasion of the NATO Chicago Summit in May, the international community reaffirmed its intention to continue to assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) beyond 2014 for the sustainable stability of Afghanistan.

Based on the outcomes of the previous international conferences, the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan aims to pave the

way to the sustainable development of Afghanistan, taking into account what the situation may be after 2014.

The conference will be chaired by Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba, Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul and Afghanistan Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal. Other participants come from approximately 70 countries and relevant international organizations.

The conference aims for several achievements, such as the reaffirming of the partnership between the international community and the Afghan government until 2014 and during the Transformation Decade and clarifying the problems and challenges for Afghanistan and the international community for a sustainable development strategy of Afghanistan and affirming long-term mutual commitments.

All the plenary sessions at the conference can be viewed live through the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For more information, visit www.mofa.go.jp.

**Heartiest Welcome
to His Excellency Hamid Karzai,
President of the Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan**

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Brief profile of President Hamid Karzai of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

President Hamid Karzai was born on Dec. 24, 1957, in the Karz area of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. He is an ethnic Pashtun of the Popalzai tribe.

Karzai's father, uncle and grandfather served as leading politicians under the last king of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah, who reigned from 1933 to 1973.

Karzai studied political science at Himachal Pradesh University in India from 1979 to 1983, before going on to further study in France and the United States.

During the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR in the 1980s, Karzai was a fundraiser for the mujahedeen to help fight

the Soviets.

Following the withdrawal of the USSR, Karzai served as deputy foreign minister from 1992 to 1994 in the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani.

When the Taliban emerged in the mid-1990s, Karzai initially recognized them as a legitimate government, but later he refused to serve as the Taliban's ambassador because of the relations between the Taliban and Pakistan. He lived in Pakistan among other Afghanistan refugees.

Supported by the U.S., Karzai and his group of fighters entered Afghanistan in October 2001.

In December 2001, Karzai was named chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration, which was formed under the Dec. 5, 2001, Bonn Agreement in Germany.

In June 2002, Karzai was appointed as president of the Afghan Transitional Administration.

In the October 2004 presidential election, Karzai received 55 percent of the vote and became the first democratically elected leader of Afghanistan. He was re-elected for a second five-year term in November 2009.

Karzai is married and has a son.

Heartiest Welcome

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