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On the occasion of the Afghan Development Forum, the Board of ACBAR is releasing its statement, 'Enhancing Aid Effectiveness', which examines aid delivery in Afghanistan, in particular the use of aid, efficiency, transparency and use of Afghan resources.

The Statement make a series of recommendations for enhancing aid effectiveness, which includes the establishment of indicators of aid effectiveness, with reporting obligations for donors, and the creation of an independent Aid Ombudsman to monitor donor performance and make recommendations for improved efficiency and coordination.

Commenting on the Statement, Anja de Beer, Director of ACBAR, said,

"Widespread disillusionment with the state of development in Afghanistan requires urgent efforts to improve the effectiveness of aid. Tinkering round the edges will not be enough.

"The delivery of aid is being distorted by domestic political agendas and the pressure for quick results. This is leading to unsuitable and unsustainable projects and is undermining the potential of aid to address the needs of the Afghan people.

"Too much aid is spent on 'technical assistance' without proper scrutiny of its effectiveness and little effort is being made to maximise the use of Afghan human and material resources.

"What is urgently needed is for donors to ensure that aid is delivered and sequenced in accordance with Afghanistan's development priorities.

Commenting on ACBAR's recommendations, Matt Waldman, Policy and Advocacy Adviser for Oxfam International, said:

"The Afghanistan Compact has 77 benchmarks for the Afghan government but none for donors. Indicators and targets for aid effectiveness should be established, to measure donor performance with their obligations under the Compact.

"An independent Aid Ombudsman should be created to monitor aid delivery, receive complaints and make recommendations for improved coordination and efficiency.

"Greater transparency is essential: donors should provide full information on aid flows. Donors must also fulfil their Compact commitments to make greater use of Afghan resources, both human and material.

"NGOs recognise that they too must improve their efficiency and performance. But in terms of aid effectiveness, as the providers of funds comprising over 40% of Afghanistan's licit economy, donors have a heavy responsibility to raise their game."

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Notes to Editors

For further information and expanded analysis on ACBAR's position on aid, please refer to ACBAR's paper "Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan: At a Crossroad", November 2006.

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