

**Dear High Representative Josep Borell Fontelles and Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen,**

The abrupt cut-off of foreign funding since the Taliban takeover threatens to enable the collapse of economy and public services in Afghanistan. Millions of lives along with their livelihoods are at risk. A harsh winter is approaching and unless international development aid is unblocked and funding is able to enter the country, we anticipate famine, death, migration flows and potential destabilisation. The urgency of the situation cannot be underscored enough.

The public health system has virtually closed down due to frozen aid. Today only some 15% of the country's more than 2,000 health facilities are operational, denying millions of poor Afghans the right to health care. Acute malnutrition among children and mothers is on the rise. An estimated additional 100 pregnant women per day are at risk of dying as they are denied access to cesarean surgery. We welcome the recent action by Global Fund, UNDP and WHO to start funding the reopening of public health facilities, including salaries for thousands of health workers. Space is here being carved out that can be built on for saving the gains of the last two decades, within the health sector and beyond.

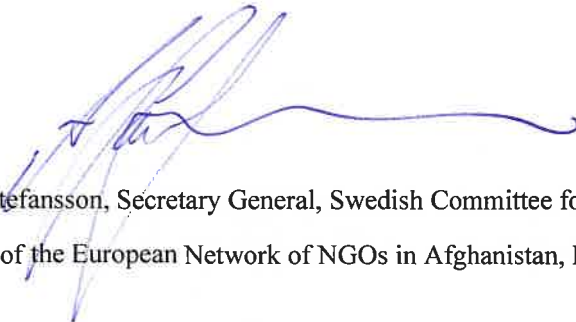
We welcome the commitments that recently have been made to flash appeals for humanitarian support to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the complete meltdown we are now witnessing of social and economic life will result in calamity far beyond what can be addressed by humanitarian action. Public services, livelihoods and jobs must be saved and funded. To be able to scale up, aid actors need to be able to access the banking system.

We represent a large number of European NGOs that have decades of multi-programmatic presence on the ground in Afghanistan. We know that public services and community-level livelihoods can be supported, and we reach millions of girls and boys, women and men. We have been able to do so also in recent years, in areas predominantly controlled by the Taliban.

The time has now come for decisions to be made. This requires political will, to save a whole nation of some 40 million people that are now pushed towards starvation and death. We urge you to act now, by considering the following:

- Unblocking development funding
- Repurposing existing funding mechanisms to include activities that increase resilience, support livelihoods, safeguard basic service provision and stimulate socio-economic recovery
- Ensuring that all funding is accessible to all principled actors operating in Afghanistan, including civil society and NGOs
- Facilitating a functioning banking system that allows actors to bring in funding in a predictable manner to carry out programmes and pay staff salaries.

Sincerely,



Andreas Stefansson, Secretary General, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

On behalf of the European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan, ENNA