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Canadian funding for construction, development, good governance and law and order initiatives in Afghanistan

For Immediate Release

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OTTAWA – Joined by Christopher Alexander, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Afghanistan, Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced up to \$200 million in additional aid funding for Afghanistan.

Today, Canada's New Government is investing up to \$200 million in construction, development, good governance, and law and order initiatives for Afghanistan such as:

- Promoting rural development and encouraging community involvement in project selection and design;
- Paying salaries of teachers, health workers and police to ensure that basic government services are provided;
- Providing small loans to help Afghans start small businesses that will help support their families and build their communities;
- Aiding the government of Afghanistan in its demining efforts; and
- Help build Afghanistan's counter-narcotics infrastructure.

Saskatoon-Wanuskewin MP Maurice Vellacott commented, "Projects like these and others can help build the peaceful, stable, democratic country the long-suffering Afghan people deserve."

Vellacott remarked, "Through today's announcement, our government is consolidating and enhancing the gains Canada and her allies have made on the ground in Afghanistan and, in doing so, providing hope to those who for far too long had none."

Vellacott emphasized, "Through our participation in the UN-sanctioned security mission, we are not just furthering Afghanistan's interests; we're serving Canada's national interests too, as global security hinges on our success. If we fail in Afghanistan, if the country relapses into anarchy and once again becomes a haven for extremists and terrorists, the world will be more dangerous."

Vellacott concluded, "Security is a necessary precondition for reconstruction. Were it not for the success of NATO and Afghan troops in beating back Taliban forces, our government would not have been able to make these much-needed investments in Afghanistan's future."

For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or 297-2249