

International coordination needs improvement in Afghanistan: Rice

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NEW YORK (PAN): Following a meeting with the UN Special Afghan Envoy, Kai Eide, in Washington on Monday, the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said that a lot of effort is needed to improve co-ordination among various international players in Afghanistan.

One of the key factors behind Eide's appointment to this post with a sharpened mandate has been to improve the co-ordination among various international stake holders in this war-torn country.

There is a lot of work to do to improve the coordination among the international donors to Afghanistan, the many countries that are on the ground," Rice said in joint press availability with Eide.

Acknowledging that the job of Eide's is a tough one, Rice said there is a good spirit and a good will in this regard.

Referring to the upcoming all important Paris donors meet in June, Rice said: "I look forward to working with you also to make certain that the Paris conference in June is a success. We have a lot of work to do, but we're going to do it together. And the Afghan people deserve to have that kind of support".

Addressing the press conference, Eide said he too was looking forward to the Paris conference.

It will be important that the donors who have perhaps not been too generous in the past try to mobilize the resources that the Government of Afghanistan need," he said.

And then, of course, we are starting to prepare the very important elections that will take place in 2009. So, I think we have our priorities set, and we look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead," Eide said.

Eide, who is visiting Washington for the first time as head of UNAMA said: "I have felt, since taking on these duties, and I feel that strongly today, that there is full U.S. support for what we are trying to do. That is important".

He also feel that UNAMA has the confidence of the President of Afghanistan and his government. "And with that and the sharper mandate that we have, I believe that we have the tools available to us that are important to succeed," he said.

Rice said Afghanistan as a young democracy, coming out of decades of civil war, has a lot of challenges of in terms of governance, building an economy, and security challenges.

But I'm also quite confident that with the work that NATO is doing, with the work that the UN is doing, with the work, most importantly, that the Afghan government and the Afghan people are doing, that they're going to succeed," she said.

Eide is scheduled to meet the US President, George W Bush, Tuesday.

Lkj/ajr