




## World Bank Group Committed to Assisting Afghanistan, Kim Says

World Bank Group Committed to Assisting Afghanistan, Kim Says  
Ready to support Afghanistan through 2014 transition and beyond  
The World Bank Group is strongly committed to helping the people of Afghanistan by promoting growth and reducing poverty during and beyond the withdrawal of Western security forces in 2014, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said. Making his first visit to Afghanistan as World Bank Group president, Kim met with President Hamid Karzai, Minister of Finance Omar Zakhilwal, and other ministers and discussed the business environment with private sector leaders. Kim noted that Afghanistan has achieved a great deal over the past decade. In 2012, 2.7 million girls were enrolled in schools, up from 191,000 in 2002, while the percentage of Afghans who have access to primary health care and essential hospital services rose to 60% in 2012 from only 9% in 2003. "The World Bank Group is strongly committed to helping the Afghan people end poverty and build shared prosperity in the years ahead, Kim said at the conclusion of his visit. "Bolstering economic growth and job-creation will play a crucial role in enhancing stability and improving the lives of all Afghans. "We will support programs in areas that the Afghan government has identified as crucial to meeting its development goals, including education, health, irrigation, energy, infrastructure, and rural development. We are also focused on improving the governments capacity to deliver services to its citizens, and on fostering a business climate that unleashes the job-creating potential of the private sector, Kim said. Kims discussions with Afghan leaders focused on the need to engender strong, inclusive economic growth, reduce poverty, create jobs, and fight corruption. Kim also emphasized that prudent fiscal policy and budget planning will help the government sustainably finance its development operations. The World Bank Group supports Afghanistan primarily through its management of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and finance provided by the International Development Association (IDA), the World Banks fund for the worlds poorest countries. Since 2002, the ARTF has generated \$6.2 billion from 33 donors. For the current three-year period, IDA funds available for Afghanistan stand at around \$493 million, of which \$144 million was committed in fiscal year 2012 (ended in June). IDAs fiscal year 2013 areas of priority include health, skills development, and safety nets. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank Groups private sector arm, supports development of Afghanistans private sector through a combination of investments and advisory services. The current committed investment exposure of IFC is \$137 million in five companies in the telecommunications, hospitality, and financial sectors. IFC signed a \$65 million loan agreement in February with Roshan, one of Afghanistan's leading mobile operators, to finance a 3G network. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the political risk insurance arm of the World Bank Group, has \$150 million of guarantees outstanding in Afghanistan in support of MTNs cell-phone operations. MIGA is currently underwriting a \$4.5 million textile investment in Afghanistan that will create a significant number of jobs, including boosting female employment. The World Bank  
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