



**KIT** Royal  
Tropical  
Institute



## Press Release

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### United Nations and international organizations engaged in finding a way forward to tackle the deepening crisis within the Afghan health system

On 16 November 2021, [HealthNet TPO](#) and [KIT Royal Tropical Institute](#) hosted a symposium on the future of Afghanistan's health system. The event provided an opportunity to show the dire situation in hospitals through a new [documentary](#), and to discuss the steps being taken to protect a health system on the brink of collapse.

"Please do not disengage from this country of 35 million people. We need international engagement in this country. Together we can create solutions," urges Dr Akmal Samsor, ex-Spokesperson of the Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan in the new [documentary](#) highlighting the crisis unfolding on the ground. The documentary shows the current situation in hospitals and health clinics and speaks of health staff not having been paid for months and having to work with limited medical supplies like much-needed oxygen for COVID-19 patients.

"We will not disengage. We cannot afford for this system to collapse," said panellist Marriët Schuurman, Director of Stabilisation and Humanitarian Assistance at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responding to the documentary. However, she emphasized "We have to make sure that the Taliban does not legitimise itself through the support given by the humanitarian community."

There seem to be different approaches under consideration. One promising pathway currently being explored by the World Health Organisation is to work under the umbrella of the United Nations to ensure that established national and international NGOs can continue to provide health services.

"As of now thanks to the different partners and donors, we have been able to start the process of stabilisation," said Dr. Mohamed Ali Kamil, Programme Manager, Emergency Operations for the Eastern Mediterranean at WHO. "From 1st November WHO and UNICEF have agreed, with the support of humanitarian funds, to fund 34 provinces for three months. We are using the same NGOs used under SEHATMANDI". SEHATMANDI is a multi-donor funded project managed by the World Bank that funded primary and secondary health care across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan through a network of NGOs until July 2021. He also added, "For the future, there is a plan within WHO and UNICEF to brainstorm on what the future of the Afghan health system should be and then we plan to reach out to other stakeholders".

HealthNet TPO and KIT urge politicians, governments, and donors to support these organisations and stakeholders in their efforts to protect the gains made over the last decades and to prevent the health system from collapsing.

#### About

**KIT, Royal Tropical Institute** is an independent centre of expertise and education for sustainable development.

**HealthNet TPO** is an international non-governmental organisation that builds stronger communities that are healthier, more resilient and have the physical and mental capacity to recover from conflict and disaster.

#### Contact

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**Documentary:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFD5n3obhxg>

**Full Symposium:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EwWAaCwstU>