STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN

Today July 2nd, the Joint Electoral Management Body, on advice from the Electoral Complaints Commission, has published a provisional list of candidates cleared to run in September’s election. These people can now look forward to the next stage of the process, which is the start of the official campaign period on August 17th.

For those still hoping to run in the elections, and whose names have not yet been cleared, the door remains fully open until July 7th. In particular, in order to comply with the electoral law, senior public officials must resign from their positions, and people who command or belong to armed groups must disarm.

A number of prospective candidates are still in the process of handing in their weapons to secure their qualification. They will be included in the final list of candidates, to be announced on July 12th, once their compliance has been fully verified. Therefore, the Mission encourages them, and those who have not yet begun to turn in their weapons, to complete disarmament without delay.

Democratic elections must be an inclusive process, and the United Nations is working hard to ensure that as many Afghan men and women as possible participate in the parliamentary and provincial elections as candidates and voters. Facilities for disarmament have been established throughout the country. We appeal once again to prospective candidates still in possession of weapons to take this opportunity to comply with the law and help make it possible that the elections take place in a free, fair and safe environment.

Kabul, 2 July 2005