



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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(Please check against delivery)

Thank you, Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you on your able leadership of the Security Council for the current month and for conveying us today.

I would like to thank the briefers, Mr. Alakbarov, Mr. Griffiths and two brave and powerful Afghan women Ms. Yalda Hakim and Ms. Yalda Royan, for their strong, loud and clear messages. They are truly exemplifying the might, courage and capability of Afghan women. I would also like to thank other members of the Council who spoke earlier for their words of sympathies and expression of condolences and readiness to support the families affected by earthquake in Southeastern provinces of Afghanistan who desperately need immediate response and assistance as well as for underlining the need for continued engagement to support the people of Afghanistan, and particularly vulnerable groups such as children, women, girls, and minorities. I thank the donor and regional countries, the leadership and personnel of UNOCHA and UNHCR as well as other UN entities and NGOs for their sustained efforts in delivery of life-saving assistance to Afghan people and refugees in the face of such difficult times. Let me take this opportunity and express the deep appreciation of Afghan people to former SRSR Dborah Lyons and her Deputy SRSR Mette Knudsen for their tireless and dedicated efforts to support the people of Afghanistan in their quest for achieving peace, stability and prosperity in tough and challenging times. I also congratulate the designation of Mr. Markus Potzel, as the new DSRSR and wish him all the best.

Mr. President,

As we convene today, Afghans are confronted with an increasingly multi-faceted challenges including natural and man-made disasters causing further devastation, misery, uncertainty and desperate to their current and future lives. Political and security instability, economic downturn, record-breaking drought, and protracted conflict have ravaged Afghanistan's economy. This has exacerbated since the collapse of former government and Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan by force last August. Our nation's profound political, economic, and security challenges have failed to improve. Indeed, thanks to the diligent work of the United Nations, NGOs and all donors support that total humanitarian catastrophe was narrowly avoided. But despite the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance, Afghanistan is now no closer to stability, security, or self-sufficiency. The growing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance, the influx of millions of refugees, the rise of unemployment, and an estimated 95% of population faced with poverty are alarming and self-evident.

Mr. President,

In the last ten months, Afghan people were hoping to see some practical steps and changes in the policies, actions and decisions of the de facto Taliban authorities to address the current

humanitarian and socio-economic and political situation in Afghanistan and efforts to reconciliation and trust and state building to ensure rule of law, justice, safety and protection of the social, political and economic rights of all Afghan citizens. However, so far this has been far from realization.

Despite calls from Afghans, regional countries and the international community for greater ethnic, political and geographic diversity as well as respect and protection of fundamental human rights of all Afghan citizens including the rights of women and girls to work and education, we see that the Taliban have not showed flexibility in protection of human rights and the formation of a representative and accountable national government with professional staff including women and minorities to provide essential services to the people and the one that can enjoy national and international legitimacy. Additionally, efforts were made to strengthen monopoly and ruling of all male and Taliban-affiliated individuals with religious ideologies in government institutions and systematic elimination of Afghanistan's human capital in particular women.

Closure of girls' secondary and high schools, further curtailment of fundamental human rights, imposing forced Hijab or Burka on women, restricting freedoms of speech, silencing the critics' voices; and credible reports of arbitrary arrests, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment of prisoners, and extrajudicial killings. Additionally, enforced disappearances of protesters, former national security forces and individuals accused of affiliations to national resistance forces as well as reports of forced displacement of people in Panjshir, Takhar, and Baghlan provinces are contrary to their amnesty announcement and clear violations of international human rights and international humanitarian laws as well as Islamic guidance and principles. These acts of intimidation and fear must be stopped.

The security concerns are also mounting due to the emergence of armed resistance groups and the presence of Al-Qiada, Da'esh and other foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan as reported by the UNSC Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. We are also witnessing the growing number of terrorist attacks and explosions targeting religious and educational centers. Afghan minorities are being particularly targeted, as seen with the recent attack on a Gurudwara Sikh temple. These acts has caused a high number of civilian casualties and this has raised concerns and criticism at the national and international level. These are serious concerns and threats to the people of Afghanistan and regional countries.

Mr. President,

Imagine what it's like having your God-given freedoms and basic and fundamental human rights are taken away from you over a sudden; you are banned to pursue your personal aspirations including the right to education and the right to work; and ultimately as a citizen you cannot

achieve your dreams for serving your country and enjoying a decent life. That is the life of women and girls in Afghanistan right now. However, this is not only about girls and women, but all youth male or female holding or pursuing university degrees, are forced to leave the country due to lack of optimism and hope for a better future. The only day-to-day aim and struggle in life is to find a shelter, food, and clothing to survive and live a life without a goal and ambition for future. The situation for widows, without a male figure in the household, is all the bleaker. This is the typical life of all Afghans today.

Mr. President,

Despite all challenges, there is still hope and opportunity to overcome the current challenges and avoid Afghanistan from becoming a pariah state and a safe haven for foreign terrorists or sliding back into conflict. To attain this goal, firstly there is need for a national dialogue among Afghans. The people of Afghanistan are tired of war and conflict. The war is not the solution. The United Nations is well-positioned to use its existing toolkits in light of the UNAMA mandate to organize and facilitate an intra-Afghan dialogue with participation of credible Afghans from all walks of life residing in and outside of Afghanistan, including the representatives of Taliban, and opposition groups as well as regional and international partners and to work on a national solution through establishing a roadmap or mechanism in which all Afghans can reach an agreement about core issues such as their political, social and economic rights, including fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens, particularly women, youth, minorities; type of government; their right to elect; preserving the hard-won gains of past twenty-years; and amending the constitution. This requires the full support and engagement of Taliban, regional and international partners.

Secondly, I urge you and international partners to remain focused on Afghanistan, even in the face of other pressing international crises. If Afghanistan is abandoned, we risk squandering the progress made over the last 20 years. I would like to emphasize on the role of neighboring, regional and international partners including the OIC in this regard and thank them for their efforts and hosting meetings on Afghanistan and their commitments to continue supporting Afghan people. As it was emphasized, their should be a united voice in your engagements.

Thirdly, the Afghan people are deeply grateful for the international community's humanitarian assistance since the collapse of the previous government, but such aid is not sustainable. We hope that through consistent engagement, dialogue, and support of regional and the international partners a transparent and accountable mechanism and benchmarks are set up to resume the flow of development aid to provide job opportunities and improve economic and sustainable development.

Fourthly, we would like to underline the significance of a greater role and robust engagement of the United Nations in achieving enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan through tangible and innovative measures.

Fifthly, my message to the Taliban is earning the national legitimacy requires winning the minds and hearts of all Afghans. I should underline that while the Afghan people welcome the establishment of the Commission for Communications and Return of Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures as a positive step for confidence building and reconciliation, it is contradictory to see the commission extends VIP treatment to some former high-level officials despite having serious allegations of corruption and embezzlement of public assets while former civil, military and security officers are prosecuted and detained. This is counter-productive, and contrary to justice. So, we call on the Taliban that they must honor amnesty, safety and security of all former Afghan Government officials, including professional civil and military cadres and soldiers regardless of their ethnicity and gender.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Taliban ultimately have the options to determine Afghanistan's fate. I call on the Taliban to demonstrate willingness in the coming months to work towards formation of a broad based and accountable government based on the will of Afghan people, re-open girls' secondary and high schools; allow women to work and take part in the development of Afghanistan, respect and protect fundamental rights of all Afghans, and honor the national and international commitments to human rights laws and norms and finally to promote and strengthen co-existence and unity among all Afghans. A prosperous and stable Afghanistan is within their grasp. A nationwide consensus will require real compromise by all parties, but it is the only way to free Afghanistan from a cycle of dependency and instability.

I thank you.