



Security Council

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Thursday, 20 September 2012, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Wittig (Germany)

Members:

Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
China	Mr. Li Baodong
Colombia	Mr. Osorio
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
South Africa	Ms. Notutela
Togo	Mr. M'Beou
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2012/703)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2012/703)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Zalmai Rassoul.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/703, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Following the Bonn Conference in 2011, the recent series of successful high-level meetings has redefined and reinvigorated the long-term partnership between Afghanistan and the international community. The NATO Summit in Chicago produced a solid commitment to supporting Afghan security forces well beyond the end of the international combat mission in 2014. The Heart of Asia ministerial conference in Kabul put the Istanbul process, regional cooperation and political consultations on firm ground with prioritized confidence-building measures. Finally, in Tokyo on 8 July, Afghanistan and its international partners concluded a long-term compact based on

mutual accountability. Generous donor pledges for social and economic development were matched by Afghan Government commitments, notably in the areas of good governance, anti-corruption, human rights and elections.

Continued, predictable support and funding for Afghanistan is dependent on credible progress in meeting the mutually agreed Tokyo benchmarks. Donors in turn have committed not just to funding levels, but on how money is to be spent. It is understood that assistance must reinforce Government systems. That applies also to the United Nations family. And we, the United Nations family, are also committed to reinvigorating the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board as a more effective forum to ensure mutual accountability in driving and monitoring the Tokyo Framework.

As reported by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan authorities, both the military campaign and the security transition are on time and on track. The Secretary-General's report (S/2012/703) shows a decrease in security incidents between May and July as compared to 2011. Yet many ordinary citizens and Government officials throughout Afghanistan continue to point to the ongoing fragility of the security situation in Afghanistan and to the fear and insecurity that impede everyday life. Even where there are no armed clashes, an insidious campaign of intimidation and targeted killings is claiming the lives of Government officials, women's rights activists, tribal elders and community leaders, including those actively working for peace. Insecurity comes not just at the hands of the Taliban and other anti-Government forces, but also from predatory armed groups and narcotics rings. The impact is visible in the curtailed delivery of development programmes and humanitarian aid. Outreach by Government services and personnel is limited in many part of the country.

Recently I visited Kunar, a province bordering Pakistan. There I learned about the concerns of civilians arising from cross-border shelling. Humanitarian agencies have registered more than 700 families — that is, approximately 4,000 individuals — displaced from Kunar border districts to the neighbouring province of Nangarhar since April. I was also glad to hear that authorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan are already engaged in multi-level dialogue in order to resolve this situation and address its root causes.

Reports of uprisings against the Taliban in various areas of the country are a new development requiring greater analysis. Amidst three decades of conflict, the drivers of violence are complex and the actors and their allegiances fluid. The desire of local communities to have security and justice has led them to taking the situation into their own hands. There is a risk of even greater fragmentation of the security environment. Many of these localized conflicts would appear to be resistance to the Taliban, but not necessarily in support of a greater Government presence. The Government should eventually be the solution, notably by ensuring improved sub-national governance and the rule of law.

The success of another transition — that of detention facilities — will depend in large part on the extent to which any future administrative detention regime respects core human rights protections for detainees, particularly fair trial standards and the prevention of torture. I call on the new leadership in the National Directorate of Security and the Ministry of the Interior to implement the reforms necessary to prevent torture and inhumane treatment in all of their facilities.

The ultimate key to a future stable Afghanistan will be, however, successful Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political transition. The 2014 presidential elections are at the centre of attention. The conduct of credible polls with a mandate for the new country's leadership is essential to national unity and legitimacy and, as highlighted in Tokyo, a critical component of ongoing international support. I continuously encourage wide consultations and robust public debate over the future election process, including an improved legal framework for the elections, independent electoral institutions and the media coverage of the elections. It is such inclusiveness that will help ensure the transparency, integrity and acceptability of the elections and their results. At the same time, this is a time-bound process, and crucial decisions by the Independent Election Commission on voter registration, drawing lessons from past problems and mistakes and ensuring that all eligible voters have a chance to vote, are required soon, as is the demonstrable support of the Government and donors. The United Nations will support decisions taken by the Afghan authorities that contribute to the sustainability, integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process.

The strong and credible leadership of and by the Independent Election Commission is another vital aspect of electoral preparations. In appointing senior electoral officials, a wide-ranging consultative

process on potential candidates who enjoy respect and acceptability across the political spectrum is essential. Also crucial is clear agreement, with wide buy-in, on the final dispute resolution mechanism.

Fostering an environment conducive to building national accord on a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is among our priorities. As part of this, we plan to support a track II inter-Afghan dialogue to help engage civil society and broad political forces in discussing the future of the country. Given the increasing urgency of seeing progress towards peace and reconciliation, I would consider it useful to reflect upon possible revisions of the travel ban procedure, while fully respecting the relevant Security Council resolutions and the sanctions regime under resolution 1988 (2011). Such revisions could further facilitate the safe passage and travel of those anti-Government forces that genuinely wish to participate in contacts, discussions and talks for the purpose of reconciliation.

I welcome the continued momentum of the Istanbul process and the gradual start of the activities of the relevant working groups on confidence-building measures. I also welcome the emerging interest of regional organizations, notably the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in engaging with Afghanistan and UNAMA in a structured dialogue for the benefit of Afghanistan and the region.

At UNAMA, together with the wider United Nations family, we are working to sharpen and focus activities in a challenging and ever-shifting security and political environment. A criticality review — the first undertaken by a special political mission — is currently under way. Good offices, regional cooperation and support for elections, peace and reconciliation; an impartial voice and advocacy on human rights, including the rights of women and children; and helping drive development coherence and humanitarian aid are at the very core of what UNAMA does and I assume will also do after 2014, while fully respecting the new, sovereign Afghanistan.

Despite the closure of nine field offices, UNAMA still emphasizes national outreach and will continue to provide support throughout the country. I myself visited seven provincial capitals in this quarter. In two of these, Uruzgan and Ghor, while UNAMA will no longer maintain a permanent physical presence, we managed to hand over our field offices to other United Nations agencies. UNAMA's increased focus on core

activities amidst transition is taking place in conditions of a steep budget reduction for 2013. Fewer resources necessarily mean that UNAMA can deliver less, and I will not pretend otherwise. But in making strategic choices, we will focus on support for the Afghan authorities in the priority areas of our mandate in a way that ensures maximum impact.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rassoul (Afghanistan): It is truly a pleasure to be among the members of the Security Council today at this critical juncture on Afghanistan's path to peace and prosperity. I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September, and convey our appreciation for Germany's continual support and assistance for Afghanistan during its tenure on the Council. Let me also convey a warm welcome to my good friend and colleague the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš. We thank him for his clear presentation of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2012/703).

We meet at an important time as Afghanistan is transitioning confidently into a vibrant, self-reliant and sovereign nation — a nation that is increasingly taking full charge of its destiny. The Afghan people are inspired by the prospect of a future free from violence and war. And thanks to our joint efforts, important progress towards that endeavour continues.

As we speak, Afghanistan has surpassed the halfway point on our transition to full security responsibility.

Given the commencement of the third tranche of security transition in May, 75 per cent of the country will be under Afghan security responsibility by the end of November. Our progress is on track to complete the security transition by the end of 2013. The Afghan army and police are showing more resilience and effectiveness as they take on increasing responsibility to meet the country's security needs.

Needless to say, the sustainability of the Afghan National Security Forces is inextricably linked to the international community's long-term support. The outcome of the recent Chicago NATO Summit was a clear manifestation of our international partners' resolute commitment to a strong and effective Afghan national security force. We also welcome NATO's decision to develop a new training, advising and

assistance role, which will take effect in 2014, and we look forward to working with our relevant partners on the scope and mandate of the new mission.

The Afghan people are encouraged by the international community's assurance of assistance in ensuring peace and prosperity throughout the transition into the transformation decade of 2015-2024. In that regard, commitments made at the Bonn conference last year, the NATO summit in May and more recently at the Tokyo Conference in July are crucial to our long-term success.

The Tokyo Conference marked the beginning of a new relationship between Afghanistan and our international friends based on results-oriented cooperation and conducted under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. We expect the international community to meet its commitment in channelling assistance through our core budget and aligning its aid with the Afghan national priority programmes. Combating corruption, strengthening governance and consolidating the rule of law will remain key priorities for us.

President Karzai's decree of July of this year is a significant step in our counter-corruption efforts. It will be implemented through clear, time-bound measures conducted by all Government ministries, agencies and departments with a view to achieving full accountability and transparency.

Afghanistan is regaining its legitimate place in the region and the world, through playing an active role in its neighbourhood and the international community. Our multilateral agreements and strategic partnerships involve long-term commitments among Afghanistan and our international partners. The partnerships we have formed, both in our neighbourhood and beyond, are essential to preserving the historic achievements of Afghanistan's young democracy and securing the country's future peace and stability.

Thus far, we have concluded strategic, long-term partnership agreements with United States of America, India, China, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Australia. We see those partnerships as key elements in our collective fight against the twin menaces of terrorism and extremism and in supporting our evolving national ownership in order to achieve future peace and stability.

As we continue our transition, with bold steps towards strengthened Afghan sovereignty and national ownership, the enemies of Afghanistan have continued their desperate attempts to undermine our progress towards a brighter future. Terrorist attacks have increasingly targeted families and innocent Afghan men, women and children in many parts of the country, putting a brutal and tragic halt to their peaceful lives. Undoubtedly, the unremitting violence plaguing Afghanistan has resulted from the continued military, financial and ideological support enjoyed by terrorists, and the presence of sanctuaries and safe-havens outside the country's borders.

Despite the continuing fight against terrorism, the next few years of political and security transition will be vital to a stable future for Afghanistan. We are working diligently to ensure fruitful results in the peace and reconciliation efforts under way. Our inclusive peace and reconciliation process seeks to build trust and confidence among all Afghans. We are determined to integrate within the folds of society those elements of the armed opposition who are willing to renounce violence, cut ties with the terrorist groups and accept the Afghan constitution.

The High Peace Council has revitalized its approach to reconciliation efforts. The international community and our region have an important part to play. The role of the Security Council will be imperative in that process. We thank the Council for supporting our reconciliation efforts by meeting the delisting requests that we have presented. By the same token, we hope that the new mandate of the Taliban sanctions committee will include the necessary adjustments — in recognition of the importance of an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process — to promote a more responsive and flexible sanctions regime to be used more effectively and positively in encouraging those who are willing to join that process. We therefore look forward to working closely with Council members to amend resolution 1988 (2011) in a way that further benefits and accelerates the Afghan peace process.

The violence in Afghanistan has had a drastic effect on the security and well-being of our citizens. We express our serious concern about the growing number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, the majority of which are caused by the Taliban and other extremist groups. Meanwhile, loss of innocent life and harm to populations have also occurred in the course of NATO operations. The loss of even one innocent life is one

too many. We underscore, yet again, the need to exert all measures necessary to protect civilian populations.

The greatest challenges to peace and stability in Afghanistan, such as terrorism, extremism and narcotic drugs, are shared regionally and internationally. Our shared threats require cooperative solutions. We are working with regional countries and other partners for a comprehensive response to those menaces. Launched in November of last year, the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan is gaining momentum. The process was further crystallized at the Heart of Asia ministerial conference in Kabul in June, with the prioritization of key confidence-building measures. We look forward to coming together with our Heart of Asia partners in this city, in less than a week from today, at the next meeting of senior officials.

Let me now turn to a matter of deep and serious concern to my Government and the Afghan people. The shelling of areas of Kunar province in eastern Afghanistan from across the Durand Line has led to unprecedented anger and frustration among Afghans from all walks of life. We reiterate our call for an immediate and complete end to such acts, which have taken the lives of dozens of Afghans, mainly civilians, and left many more wounded. We remain in close contact with the Government of Pakistan to address that issue holistically and resolutely.

Failure to end such attacks risks jeopardizing Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral relations, with potential negative consequences for the bilateral cooperation necessary for peace, security and economic development in our two countries and the wider region. Afghanistan desires close and fruitful relations with Pakistan, a neighbour with whom we share historical, cultural and traditional ties.

As we work to tackle the challenges on the road ahead, let us not lose sight of the historic, transformative successes achieved thus far. Significant advances in social and economic development are clearly evident. Millions of students — boys, girls, men and women — are enrolled in primary and higher education. A majority of Afghans now have access to basic health services and are increasingly taking part in the democratic process through the exercise of their right to shape their own destiny.

While we have seen such changes unfolding throughout the last decade, today we can be proud that

the initiatives under way in the area of development are increasingly Afghan-driven and Afghan-led, with support from the international community. That characteristic is crucial for the sustainability of development efforts and for helping Afghanistan to realize its full potential. With the next Presidential elections fast approaching, we are fully committed to ensuring a transparent election process, free of any external interference.

After over three decades of struggle and suffering, we are moving ahead with Afghanistan's recovery and renewed strength. Afghans recognize the important indications of our sovereignty. We are determined to further our efforts towards national ownership across the board, as the most effective way to ensure lasting peace and security in our country.

Before concluding, allow me to register the Afghan Government's strong condemnation of the recent senseless, provocative acts of insult to Islam and Prophet Mohammad, Peace Be Upon Him. While acknowledging our fellow Muslims' right to peacefully protest against those insults, we deplore any violence resulting from such protests, especially against diplomatic representations anywhere in the world.

The key to Afghanistan's future success is cooperation, both in our transition and the transformation decade to follow. Building trust and confidence with the international community is the basis for our path to security and prosperity. We are pleased that the Security Council continues to follow the situation closely, and we are thankful for their support and the support of the United Nations, including with regard to revising the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in line with the demands of Afghan sovereignty. With long-term cooperation and partnership at the centre of our efforts, we are confident that together we can build a more peaceful, stable Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing. I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Zalmi Rassoul to the Council and thank him for his statement.

Both of those statements presented a clear and comprehensive picture of Afghanistan today, of its achievements and of the challenges that still lie ahead. I will therefore not elaborate on them but will restrict

myself to two points that Portugal deems particularly important.

The first is the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan. Portugal believes that the Mutual Accountability Framework represents a practical and verifiable cornerstone that, together with the results of the Bonn Conference and the Chicago Summit, will allow us to build lasting cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community, strongly founded on shared interests and accountability. Implementing the Tokyo Framework will require, in the short and medium term, not only especially active statesmanship on the part of the Afghan authorities but also transparency and renewed cooperation among Afghan and international partners in a decisive phase that is not without tensions and risks.

In the case of Afghanistan, integration and partnership at the regional level are certainly no less relevant than cooperation with the wider world. In that regard, progress in regional integration initiatives, among which we would like to highlight the Istanbul Process — as do the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/703) and the statements we have just heard — is an encouraging example of what can be achieved through vigorous Afghan leadership and a strong commitment to peace and stability.

Secondly, let me raise the issue of human rights. I would like to underline the particular predicament of children in the context of the Afghan conflict. Their specific targeting is particularly odious, and that matter must continue to receive due attention in the Secretary-General's reports. Denying children humanitarian access to health care and vaccination, as has recently been the case, is a gross violation of their rights and a crime against the people and the future of Afghanistan.

The efforts of Afghan and international forces to reduce civilian casualties must be acknowledged. It is our hope that the transition and further assumption of responsibility for security by Afghan forces will also continue to translate into better tracking and mitigation of civilian casualties, as well as into reliable and clear accountability mechanisms.

As regards the rights of women, the information in the report is far from encouraging. Not only do harmful traditional practices continue to infringe on women's and girls' rights, but the recent mockery of justice on the part of the Taliban against a young woman has rightly caused outrage around the world. The

courageous and sensitive work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in that area deserves our full support and appreciation. We call once more on national authorities and international partners to support implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and of a national action plan for women in Afghanistan. I should also note that the report mentions that efforts to recruit women police officers are lagging. We urge the Government of Afghanistan to continue to address the matter, since it is critical to ensuring access to justice for women and children.

I will conclude by reiterating my country's support for the work of UNAMA and its Special Representative. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is undergoing a reconfiguration process that presents renewed challenges in a very difficult environment. Its mission is not yet finished. The Security Council will continue to follow the Mission's activity closely and make sure that it will continue to be able to fulfil its mandate in supporting Afghanistan on its path to peace and prosperity, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan rightly said.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/703). We would also like to welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš and thank him for his briefing and his excellent work at the helm of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Let me also recognize the presence of Minister Zalmay Rassoul, whom we wish to thank for his helpful intervention. The Secretary-General's report discusses some relevant events that we would like to highlight.

First, we commend the success of the Tokyo Conference, which has further consolidated the commitments of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community and thereby strengthened a lasting partnership. We support the new Mutual Accountability Framework, focused on security, sustainable and legitimate Government structures and, no less important, the promotion of economic development in Afghanistan. We will follow attentively the implementation of the commitments attentively, and we welcome the Government's efforts to formulate ways to implement the results.

In that regard, we know that Tokyo addressed the importance of holding credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections

in 2014 and 2015, in accordance with the Afghan Constitution. We hope that it will be possible to agree on a legal and technical framework to facilitate those efforts in a timely manner. It will be particularly important to ensure that an electoral law and a law on the duties and structure of the Independent Electoral Commission are passed in the first quarter of 2013, one year before the elections.

Secondly, we are pleased that the transition process in the security sector has, up to now, gone forward as expected and hoped, though not without significant challenges that continue to be a cause for concern. On the one hand, we are encouraged by the continuing progress being made in the process of transferring responsibility for security, which now covers 75 per cent of the population. On the other hand, as we know, Afghanistan's problems cannot be resolved through military means alone. That is why we would like to see the same degree of progress and resolve directed at the peace and reconciliation process, which should be guided and led by the Afghans. We support UNAMA in its continued role of supplier of good offices. We also believe that the sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) is a worthwhile and appropriate tool.

Thirdly, we again raise the issue of the protection of civilians. While we have noted a drop in the number of civilian victims, we are nonetheless alarmed by the complexity and intensity of those attacks. We agree with the report's assessment that attacks on colleagues and international counterparts by persons in Afghan uniform are a worrying development affecting trust during a security transition that needs to be based on close coordination between the parties. We also feel that the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan is deplorable. We therefore call for concrete steps to be taken to protect and ensure their rights, and we firmly support the United Nations in that area.

Finally, we cannot fail to express our concern about the substantial decline in the resources allocated to UNAMA, and we hope that efforts will be made to have that decline affect its operational capacity and ability to fulfil its mandate as little as possible. This is a delicate time during which we should rather be considering strengthening the presence of the United Nations in order to ensure that Afghanistan will be ready and able to deal adequately with the stage to come after 2014. Also, taking into account the enormous humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, we were struck by the fact that

on 1 August financing of the Consolidated Appeals Process was at a level of 33.5 per cent — in other words, much less than half of the amount that was available during the same period of 2011.

I would like to conclude by saying that Guatemala supports Afghanistan's aspirations to become a democratic, prosperous and stable country, which is a vision shared by the international community and which should be demonstrated in the form of political will.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/703) and his Special Representative, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing. I also welcome the contribution of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Zalmai Rassoul, to today's debate.

I will focus my statement on three areas — the recent Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, progress on transition and the strength of regional cooperation and support to Afghanistan.

First, with regard to Tokyo, there has been significant progress on development in Afghanistan over the last decade. Millions more children attend schools, and 85 per cent of the population now has access to basic health care facilities. But Afghanistan will need further support to maintain the progress. The Tokyo Conference brought the international community together to respond to the challenge. Major commitments were made by international donors to demonstrate long-term support for Afghanistan to a total of \$16 billion over four years. The United Kingdom has committed to maintaining funding at current levels — £178 million a year every year for five years.

The Afghan Government has acknowledged that it must play its part in return. The Mutual Accountability Framework adopted at Tokyo commits the Afghan Government to improving governance, undertaking electoral reforms, tackling corruption and promoting human rights, especially those of women. We look forward to working with the Afghan Government in achieving those goals over the coming months and years.

Secondly, with regard to transition, the transition of responsibility for security arrangements to the Afghan authorities is progressing well. Seventy-five per cent of the Afghan population will soon live in regions where the Afghan National Security Forces have taken

the lead for security arrangements. The fact that there has been no significant deterioration of public order in areas where transition has taken place is a testament to the success of that programme.

The issue of so-called green on blue attacks has featured prominently this week. The security of our deployed forces in Afghanistan — or anywhere in the world — remains a top priority, but that does not imply any shift in the commitment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to partnering with, training, advising and assisting our counterparts in the Afghan National Security Forces.

It is the tragedy of all conflicts that civilians often carry the heaviest burden of suffering. The protection of the Afghan civilian population remains at the core of ISAF's military strategy. ISAF forces work hard to minimize levels of civilian casualties. As the report of the Secretary-General once again highlights, ISAF has had considerable success in that respect. On the other hand, the United Kingdom notes with grave concern that the insurgency continues to target civilians indiscriminately.

Thirdly, with respect to regional cooperation, the United Kingdom welcomes the significant progress made through the Istanbul process. The United Kingdom is one of a number of countries supporting the process, sharing expertise and providing technical assistance where requested. The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary participated in the Kabul ministerial conference in June, where we offered our support for confidence-building measures on disaster management, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and for chambers of commerce. Regional cooperation of that type will be key in supporting the future stability of Afghanistan, and it is reassuring to see such commitment from all involved.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a vital role to play, both during and beyond transition, in coordinating international efforts and supporting the Government of Afghanistan as it delivers on its commitments. It is important that we find the right level of funding for UNAMA's activities, just as it is essential that clear strategic criteria underpin decisions to find budget efficiencies. Special Representative Kubiš has our full support in that regard, as he seeks to ensure that UNAMA continues to implement its core mandate as set out in resolution 2041 (2012).

Over the course of 2012, the Afghan Government has made a number of significant undertakings. In parallel, from the Chicago Summit in May to the Kabul Ministerial Conference in June and the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July, the international community has demonstrated that its commitment to Afghanistan is for the long term. Let me conclude by making clear that the United Kingdom will continue to work with the people and the Government of Afghanistan, as well as the international community, to build a stable future for the country.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I would like to thank the Special Representative, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his presence here today and for his briefing to the Council. I would also like to thank him for his work and dedication to the cause of Afghanistan. We would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, and thank him for his briefing on the situation in his country today, a country that we will be visiting very soon.

Colombia supports the international community's commitment to Afghan development, which was renewed during the Tokyo Conference held last July. There, we agreed to work towards a stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan in the transition into the transformation decade of 2015-2024, based on the principles and mutual commitments in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

The adoption of the presidential decree of 27 July, which sets forth specific measures and timelines for fighting impunity and corruption, represents a very important step towards fulfilling the commitments undertaken by Afghanistan in Tokyo in the five priority areas that were identified, namely, democracy and fair elections, the rule of law and human rights, public financing and commercial banking, budgetary implementation and governance, and, finally, sustainable and inclusive growth. That and progress in other areas, in both the political and the institutional arenas, contribute by strengthening a fully functional and sustainable State that is capable of providing basic services to its people and progressively reduce dependence on foreign aid. Inclusive, transparent and fair elections, to be held in 2014, will be a clear indicator of the progress achieved by the Afghan State in the area of the strengthening of democracy.

With regard to security, we can only express our concern about the escalation of violence seen in recent

months. While those incidents might seem not to have affected the transition process, which provides for Afghans assuming total responsibility and leadership in 2014, it is still necessary to continue increasing the professionalism and capacity of the security forces and law enforcement in the Afghan police, including institutionalization of the mechanisms of accountability and the fight against impunity, as well as deepening measures undertaken to provide protection to civilians, respect human rights and ensure a structure of command and oversight.

To that end, the contribution of the International Security Assistance Force and NATO's Afghan training mission continue to be vital. We hope that the recent incidents will not impact their cooperation and that their commitments will be upheld in that area beyond 2014. Advances in the political and reconciliation processes have also been affected by recent security incidents that have led to a number of civilian victims.

It is important that all parties show clear signs of commitment to the dialogue and reconciliation process in order to prevent further instability and fragmentation. We are optimistic about the interest in dialogue shown by some Taliban groups. In that regard, cooperation of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities with the Government of Afghanistan, established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), must be strengthened so that the tasks and activities developed in compliance with the mandate continue to be a tool of support to the peace and reconciliation process.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Special Representative should continue to give priority to supporting the Government forces towards an Afghan-led and -owned peace and reconciliation process and to direct their cooperation and assistance activities towards strengthening the role of Afghan institutions in order to meet their responsibilities in priority areas, such as governability, economic development and regional cooperation. The United Nations should continue to play a central role in coordinating international efforts with the national authorities so as to ensure consistency with the priorities identified by Afghanistan.

With regard to the worrying humanitarian situation, it is crucial that all parties respect humanitarian principles and facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid to those who need it most. That must be a fundamental

principle for participation in the reconciliation process. Humanitarian agencies are aware of the tremendous need to provide services such as health care, sanitation, education and food, which require more funding. The great national objective should be supporting a State structure capable of ensuring governability and economic stability at the local and international levels and obtaining and access to justice as fundamental to a sustainable and lasting transition.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs can depend on Colombia's full support in all areas that he deems necessary and in which we can be of use.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I welcome Foreign Minister Rassoul back to the Council and thank him for his remarks. I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš again for all that he does and for his briefing. I want to extend, through him, our thanks again to the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations country team for their dedicated work under very difficult circumstances.

Since we last met (see S/PV.6793), the international community has further demonstrated its commitment to the Afghan people beyond 2014. As recent events have shown, the transition is on track and our commitment to Afghanistan is enduring. On 7 July, President Obama officially designated Afghanistan a major non-NATO ally of the United States. That is a powerful symbol of our commitment to Afghanistan's future. Afghanistan and its international partners have charted a responsible transition, which will transfer full responsibility for security back to Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Security Forces continue to grow in size and capability. Those Forces remain on track to reach 352,000 personnel later this year. Two thirds of all those who serve in uniform defending Afghanistan are now Afghans, and over half the Afghan population is protected by a predominantly Afghan force. We look forward to the full implementation of the third tranche of the transition later this year, at which point 75 per cent of the Afghan population, including every provincial capital, will be in the transition process. As pledged at the NATO Summit in Chicago in May, the international community will support the Afghan National Security Forces beyond 2014.

While we applaud such developments, we recognize that many challenges remain, including so-called insider attacks. The reasons for those attacks

vary, but we are working closely with the Government of Afghanistan on a range of measures to stop them. We have not and will not allow such attacks to undermine international efforts to strengthen the Afghan National Security Forces and put them increasingly in the lead.

We know Afghanistan's security depends not only on strong capable security forces, but also on the Afghan people's access to economic opportunity and their belief that their Government is effectively serving their needs. The international community's total pledges in Tokyo of \$16 billion in economic assistance through 2015 meet the World Bank's estimate of Afghanistan's requirements, just as Chicago met its security requirements. That assistance will help Afghanistan to attract private sector investment and to usher in a transformation decade, marked less by aid and more by trade, all in a framework of mutual accountability and shared responsibility.

We welcome President Karzai's decree last month aimed at tackling corruption in Afghanistan's institutions and his recent comments on reforming the justice sector. Both are necessary to strengthen the rule of law and to attract more trade and investment.

Nothing offers a more credible alternative to insurgency than the jobs and opportunities that accompany foreign investment and the expansion of markets. As Afghanistan develops, we see it at the centre of a region whose integration will bring greater prosperity for Afghans and their neighbours. That new Silk Road is already emerging. Electricity from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is powering Afghan businesses. Trains are running on a new rail line from the Uzbek border to Mazar-e Sharif. One day, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline could ship billions of dollars worth of natural gas from Central Asia across Afghanistan to South Asia.

The help of Afghanistan's neighbours and near neighbours is necessary for Afghanistan to become secure, stable and prosperous. We are pleased to see that vision beginning to come to fruition through the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan and various regional and trade agreements.

To be sustainable, improved security and greater economic development must rest on a foundation of good governance. Credible and broadly inclusive elections in 2014 and 2015 will bolster the legitimacy of the Government in Kabul, vest Afghans in its

success, and send a message to all Afghan factions that their interests are better advanced through political participation than violence.

The protection of the rights of Afghan women is essential to Afghanistan's future. We strongly condemn all violence against women and are troubled by recent reports that underscore the seriousness of the problem. The United States continues to work with the Afghan Government, civil society and the international community to increase awareness of women's rights, prevent the abuse and detention of women and girls and hold the perpetrators of such violence accountable. We support the United Nations and Afghanistan's continuing efforts to establish and to expand the protection and shelter services for victimized women.

United Nations support for the Afghan people and the country's transition has been indispensable. From supporting regional diplomacy and the political process to coordinating between the Afghan Government and donors and implementing the agreements of the Kabul process and the Tokyo Framework, UNAMA will continue to play a critical role in Afghanistan moving forward.

The United States appreciates the United Nations development and humanitarian assistance contributions in Afghanistan, as exemplified by the important work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the solutions strategy for Afghan refugees. We look forward on further discussions on how the United Nations role will evolve to support the Afghan people following the security transition. We trust that UNAMA will consult closely with the Government of Afghanistan, Council members and regional partners as it continues planning.

It is the Afghan people, their leaders and the region who must ultimately make the hard choices that will shape their future.

As they do, the United States will continue to support them and welcome the valuable contributions of the United Nations in shaping this process.

Mr. Bouchaara: (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me in turn to welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and to thank him for his briefing. I also take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and to thank him most sincerely for his statement.

During the period covered by the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/703), the international community reiterated its commitment to supporting Afghanistan at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, held on 8 July and co-sponsored by Afghanistan and Japan. In this context, Morocco welcomes the fact that the international community has undertaken to earmark, in the years ahead, more than \$16 billion for assistance to Afghanistan, which attests to the importance that the international community attaches to that country and to the need to stand with it in its efforts to bring about stabilization and reconstruction. The Conference also saw the adoption of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, which reiterated the commitment of the Afghan Government with respect to presidential and legislative elections in 2014 and 2015.

On the political front, the presidential decree adopted on 27 July laid out the priorities of Mr. Karzai's Government for the two years ahead, in particular the fight against corruption, the renewal of State institutions and the establishment of a mechanism providing for better management of State institutions.

On the security front, we note that the number of incidents has declined considerably since last year. Still, it is higher than it was in 2010. This slight improvement took place at a time when the third transition phase allowed for a transfer of responsibilities to the Afghan security forces, who now control an area in which 75 per cent of Afghanistan's population lives. In addition, we have seen an increase in the number of Afghan fighters who have joined the Afghan peace and reintegration programme, which by mid-August included more than 5,000 new ex-combatants. This will clearly have a positive impact on security in Afghanistan.

Regional cooperation during this period was significant, as shown by the Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference held on 14 June in Kabul, which involved 14 countries and seven regional and international organizations, and identified priority confidence-building measures linked to such areas as counter-terrorism, the fight against drug trafficking, trade opportunities and regional infrastructure.

Beyond the Conference, Afghan authorities have pursued their efforts to strengthen cooperation in areas of common interest with neighbouring States. We welcome the fact that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has undertaken a number of visits to the region in order to increase cooperation with

the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and between those States and Afghanistan.

In a different vein, the humanitarian situation, particularly that of women and children, calls for the collective commitment of the Afghan authorities and the United Nations to providing the necessary assistance to vulnerable populations. The issue of refugees is also a problem, both for Afghanistan and for neighbouring States. As such, additional efforts must be undertaken in order to repatriate refugees and ensure that they are reintegrated into their countries of origin.

Afghanistan is a country that has pulled back from the brink and come a long way towards extricating itself from fratricidal and deadly conflict. It still has a long way to go to stabilize, to rebuild itself and to build State institutions in order to finally ensure the rule of law. To that end, the role of UNAMA, neighbouring States and the entire international community is vital in assisting a country that continues to endure the agony of war.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMA for their efforts as they fulfil their mandate.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2012/703). My country is grateful for his efforts and initiatives to help restore lasting peace in that country. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and thank him for his statement.

Today, as we hold the third debate on the situation in Afghanistan this year, we must welcome the tangible developments on the ground, although significant challenges remain in the area of security, politics, the fight against narcotic drugs and corruption, to mention just a few.

In his report, the Secretary-General observes that the transfer of responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces has gone smoothly. It is my country's hope that the Government-mandated Transition Coordination Commission will continue its efforts to put the finishing touches on the preparations for subsequent phases of the transition.

We note a slight decrease in the number of violent incidents, especially suicide attacks, due, among other things, to measures undertaken by the Afghan authorities to increase both the police forces and the

army, including by recruiting more women within the national police, creating specialized community policing units in certain provinces, and establishing local police programmes. However, we are concerned that indiscriminate attacks have once again increased in intensity in recent weeks. We condemn attacks targeting neutral subjects such as United Nations staff, in particular locally recruited staff and their partners. Planned attacks continue to make innocent victims of political and religious personalities and of peaceful populations.

The suicide attack of 18 September killed 12 people, including eight South Africans working for a private aviation company. This clearly illustrates the atmosphere of insecurity and terror that prevails. We take this opportunity to reiterate the Togolese Government's firm condemnation of this heinous attack and to present to the South African delegation our sincere condolences. We encourage the Afghan Government and the international community to continue to invest freely in helping the Afghan people to emerge from this unacceptable situation.

In that regard, we commend the initiatives undertaken in the area of fighting drugs with the help of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The approval by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board of the Counter-Narcotics Monitoring Mechanism developed to that end bodes well in that regard, in our view. All that remains is to implement these measures in order to allay the serious concerns of partners and friendly countries.

The commitments undertaken by the Afghan authorities are also coming to fruition at the political level, with President Hâmid Karzai's announcement that he will devote the last two years of his term to the promotion of good governance by fighting impunity and corruption, promoting accountability and improving the effectiveness of aid. At the same time, the electoral events of 2014 and 2015 will be major challenges for the Government, which, in the terms of the Tokyo Declaration and the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, must organize presidential and legislative elections that are credible and inclusive. It is Togo's firm desire to see the electoral law on the structure of the Independent Electoral Commission adopted within the allotted time frame. In that regard, we dare to hope that the resignation of the head of electoral operations will have no impact on the normal functioning of the process already under way.

We appreciate the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the second phase of the electoral support project Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow, and of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in providing analytical, consultative and logistical support to the High Peace Council. We also welcome the fact that the High Peace Council has undertaken activities to promote political conditions to encourage the peace process. In that regard, we encourage continuing the dialogue with all political players.

Over and above assistance from the international community, Afghanistan more than ever needs the support of the countries of the region. The tangible progress made in the areas of regional cooperation and mutual confidence-building during the Ministerial Conference held in Kabul in June is a positive sign of a successful conclusion of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. Togo urges the countries concerned to do everything in their power to remove obstacles to cooperation with Afghanistan. Specifically, we would invite the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to continue to work together in order to overcome their border problems.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, the report (S/2012/703) notes the commitment of the Ministry of Public Health to supporting action to reduce infant mortality. Significant progress was also achieved in the indicators for women and children. My country is very pleased with this and places a great deal of hope in the programme for voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees developed jointly between the Afghan technical ministries and the United Nations.

The Afghanistan situation will need, as it has in the past, the international community's help, especially after the scheduled withdrawal of international forces in late 2014. The hopes created by the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July should not be dashed. The noteworthy progress that has been made should be supported and sustained. I reiterate Togo's profound thanks to the United Nations and all its specialized agencies, including UNDP, as well as to UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force, for all their sacrifices with a view to providing Afghanistan with a promising future.

Ms. Notutela (South Africa): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for introducing the quarterly report on Afghanistan

(S/2012/703). South Africa welcomes the participation of the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Mr. Zalmi Rassoul, and thanks him for his assessment of the situation in his country.

Today's debate is occurring in the context of large-scale violence and demonstrations across the Islamic world. Afghanistan has not remained immune from these incidents, as borne out by the suicide attack earlier this week, which claimed the lives of eight nationals from my country. These incidents, capped with escalating violence in Afghanistan over the past month, have undermined the progress made towards peace and remind us that much more needs to be done.

South Africa welcomes the continued efforts of the Afghan leadership, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), regional actors and the international community to place the country on a sustained trajectory of peace and sustainable development. Sustainable peace can be achieved only through dialogue and reconciliation. The Afghan Government's persistent initiatives to engage with the armed opposition and the ongoing calls of President Karzai for the armed opposition to lay down their arms are welcome. Intra-Afghan accommodation is the only solution for securing long-term stability and security, including outreach to the Taliban.

The framework provided by resolution 1988 (2011) is important in facilitating this process. We are concerned that some elements of Afghan society have chosen not to engage in the reconciliation process. A commitment to national reconciliation and a peaceful political solution remain pivotal for the long-term stability of Afghanistan. The ongoing efforts of the High Peace Council to promote political outreach activities and sustainable peace in the country are welcome. An all-inclusive political process must be inclusive of women, young people and religious representatives in deciding the future of their country. The creation of civil society working groups aimed at mobilizing the largest section of Afghan society in support of the work of the High Peace Council is therefore a significant development. UNAMA's prioritization of providing support to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is necessary to ensuring sustainable peace in the country.

Afghanistan continues to move towards consolidating its democratic and governance institutions. We welcome the legal and legislative framework that is currently being put in place to ensure fair, transparent and inclusive presidential and

parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015. In line with the decisions adopted at the Tokyo Conference, we welcome President Karzai's pledge during an address to the special joint session of the National Assembly in June that, during his remaining two years as President, he will be committed to further strengthening good governance, accountability and effectiveness.

In spite of the decrease in security incidents and civilian casualties during the reporting period, UNAMA's mid-term report for 2012 indicates that over 3,000 people were killed and injured, of whom 30 per cent were women and children. Women and children continue to be disproportionately affected by the conflict. Civilian casualties affected by the conflict and resulting from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) air strikes, as well as anti-Government use of improvised explosive devices remain a concern. We wish to reiterate that all armed elements operating in Afghanistan have the responsibility to ensure that civilians are protected, and the failure of State and non-State actors alike to uphold that responsibility should not go unpunished.

The Secretary-General's ninth report on the protection of civilians (s/2012/376) underlines the importance of accountability. We were reminded of that in the presidential statement on justice and the rule of law adopted in January (PRST/2012/1), in which the Security Council reiterated its call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law and to take all the required steps to protect civilians.

The increase in incidents of green on blue attacks are of concern. As NATO troops draw down, these attacks erode trust and have the potential to undermine the smooth handover from NATO to the Afghan National Security Forces. Incidents of increased violence directed at women and the challenges that women continue to face in the economic, social and cultural sphere are of concern. We are pleased to note the commitment of the Afghan Government to address all these challenges. We favor and welcome the launch in Kabul of the N-Peace Network, a platform aimed at supporting the leadership of women in building peace.

We also emphasize that security in Afghanistan should continue to be reinforced at the national level by efforts at the regional level. We are therefore encouraged by the ongoing diplomatic and political efforts at the bilateral and regional levels to assist Afghanistan in its transition to peace and stability. The recent high-

level meetings between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul further enhance the peace process and assist in those endeavours.

There is an inextricable link between development and security in Afghanistan. In that regard, we are encouraged by the solidarity and commitment demonstrated by the international community during the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan and the summit on investment held in New Delhi.

Those initiatives are important for consolidating global support for Afghanistan's development and long-term economic sustainability, as well as for ensuring that the gains registered over the past years are not reversed.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that national ownership, coupled with international support, is crucial to achieving political, security and socioeconomic progress in Afghanistan. UNAMA's role in supporting the Government in Afghanistan is vital, and we trust that the reduction of its budget will not have a detrimental effect on its ability to deliver on its key mandate.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Kubiš for his analysis of the situation in Afghanistan. We listened carefully to the statement of the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Rassoul. Russia is interested in seeing Afghanistan become a peaceful, stable, democratic nation. Naturally, we hope that the threats posed by terrorism and drug trafficking emanating from that country will be fully eradicated.

Regrettably, as made clear by the spate of recent incidents, the country continues to face a complex security situation both in remote regions and in the capital itself. We are particularly concerned by the renewed extremism in the north of the country, where only three years ago the situation was relatively calm. The terrorists are essentially being pushed northward, from where they penetrate into the Central Asian countries. That is a direct threat to the stability of the region. We are alarmed by the wave of terrorist acts that has engulfed the country, against the backdrop of the rapidly advancing transfer responsibilities and the withdrawal of foreign troops. We express our condolences to our South African colleagues with respect to the death of a South African national during the attack on Kabul on 18 September.

The reduction in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troop strength should be offset by the qualitative enhancement of the combat readiness of the Afghan security forces, so that when the time comes for the international force to depart, the Afghan Government will have its own capabilities for maintaining law and order in order to be able to fully ensure security. Russia will continue to provide Afghan forces with assistance in that area.

We have questions with respect to the contradictory statements that foreign troops will leave Afghanistan in 2014, while foreign bases will remain. We would like to have full clarity. If the counter-terrorist mission is completed, that means that foreign bases are being maintained for some other aim not related to the Afghan challenge. If the fight against terrorism needs to continue, there will have to be an extension of the mandate by the Security Council. In either the case, a residual military presence should not be used against the interests of Afghanistan's neighbours and the countries of the region.

That is specifically why we look forward to a constructive dialogue regarding that mandate, troop strength and the objectives of any possible future NATO operation in Afghanistan. That can be established solely under a decision of the Security Council and only once the ISAF reports to the Council that it has fulfilled its existing mandate. In the context of an ISAF withdrawal, it is clear that the role of the United Nations in the Afghan settlement will grow. Its mission must be to remain the coordinator of international civilian efforts to assist in stabilization, while focusing activities on strengthening Afghan sovereignty and on the leading role of Afghans in governing their country. The consequences of reducing the mission force for operational activities must be fully explored. The issues of optimizing the participation of Afghan regions must be addressed together with the Afghan Government and taking into account the security situation in different areas of the country.

The situation remains unacceptable with respect to the illegal production, trade and trafficking in drugs in the country, which poses a threat to international peace and stability. We note the efforts of the Afghan Government to destroy opium poppy crops and fight illegal drug trafficking. However, addressing those problems requires a comprehensive approach, with the United Nations playing a coordinating role. We are confident that ISAF, regardless of its withdrawal

timetable from Afghanistan, needs to enhance the effectiveness of its counter-narcotics efforts. Particular attention and decisive action are needed for the challenge of destroying drug crops and heroin laboratories.

Unfortunately, our persistent attempts to work out cooperation with NATO in that area via regional mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), are being doggedly rebuffed. We intend to continue to work within the Moscow-Paris Pact, which has become one of the more effective international tools for countering the drug threat. We also intend to continue to work within the framework of regional organizations — the SCO, the CSTO and the quartet of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan.

National reconciliation is one way to ensure the peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem. We support the position of the Afghan Government in the context of that process. It has been approved by the Security Council and provides for a dialogue with those who have rejected violence to achieve their political aims, who do not maintain ties to Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and who recognize and comply with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Fulfilling those criteria is a prerequisite for removing individuals from the sanctions regime.

The possibility of involving different individuals in a dialogue must be approached very carefully, taking into account the sanctions regime established by the Security Council. We oppose behind-the-scenes contacts with Taliban groups that circumvent the Government of Afghanistan, which could send misleading signals as to the genuine intentions of the international community in the context of an Afghan settlement.

The regional dimension of an Afghan settlement is growing in importance. In that regard, and in combination with existing regional mechanisms, it is important to develop the Istanbul process, clearly with the active role of the United Nations. We support the approach of the Kabul Conference to strengthen regional cooperation, including through the implementation of agreed confidence-building measures. Russia is prepared to do its utmost to develop regional cooperation in the interest of Afghanistan in those areas that could be of true benefit to that country. We are open to partnerships with all interested countries in implementing projects that are meaningful for Afghanistan. We also continue to provide humanitarian

assistance to the Afghan people. We are confident that more coherent and coordinated regional efforts and the implementation of the obligations undertaken by members of the international community will contribute to ensuring the sustainable development of Afghanistan and the prosperity of its people, and will help to restore an independent, peaceful Afghanistan that is free from terrorism and drug crime.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): First of all, I would like to welcome Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and to thank him for his insightful statement. We are also grateful to Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing, as well as to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2012/703).

Today's debate provides us with an excellent opportunity to take stock of recent political and security developments in Afghanistan, as well as of related regional and international processes. The Government of Afghanistan continues to make substantial progress towards the stabilization and development of the country. It is of paramount importance to maintain the steady pace of progress attained so far, which requires equal levels of continued commitment on the part of both Afghanistan and its international partners.

Although the overall security situation in the country remains precarious — with ongoing armed clashes, assassinations and suicide attacks by insurgents, which pose a serious threat to the overall peace and stabilization effort in Afghanistan — the reporting period marked a continued quantitative decrease in security-related incidents. We take positive note of the progress made in the process of transferring security responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces and in the stability that prevails in the areas under their control.

The Council has called consistently on all parties in Afghanistan to take measures to minimize civilian casualties, which, along with causing human suffering, also seriously undermine national and international efforts towards peace and reconciliation. In that sense, we welcome steps taken by the Government, including the establishment of a civilian casualty mitigation team in the Afghan National Army, to ensure timely investigation and accurate incident tracking.

In the political realm, the continued efforts of the High Peace Council to reinvigorate the activities aimed

at creating conditions conducive to a durable peace process — in particular its practical initiatives to reach out to a wider spectrum of Afghan society and its close interaction with regional partners — are commendable. The same assessment can be made of the implementation of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme. The continued support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to both the Programme and the High Peace Council is indispensable in taking forward a broad and inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, which in turn constitutes the basis of overall stabilization and durable peace in the country.

Afghanistan's stronger political dialogue and cooperation with its immediate neighbours and other regional counterparts on a wide range of issues based on common vision and mutual confidence are imperatives for a peaceful and stable future of the country and the region. We welcome the ongoing efforts and achievements of Afghanistan and its regional partners in that regard. We stress the particular importance of the outcomes of the follow-up Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference held in Kabul on 14 June.

As part of the Istanbul process, my country participates in a number of confidence-building measures and has assumed a co-leadership role in implementing such measures in the fields of counter-narcotics and regional infrastructure. We look forward to fruitful discussions at the next senior officials meeting scheduled for 24 September in New York.

As the transition period continues towards the eventual withdrawal of international military forces and the assumption of overall security responsibility by the Afghan authorities by the end of 2014, the scope and gravity of the security and development tasks that the Government of Afghanistan has to deal with are growing, and the need for the international community's enhanced support to the Government of Afghanistan is becoming even more vital.

Proceeding from that viewpoint, we consider the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan held on 8 July as the major milestone event during the reported period, complementing and further solidifying the mutual long-term commitments of Afghanistan and the international community undertaken at the Afghanistan Conference in Bonn and the NATO Summit in Chicago. The fact of the international community's pledge of significant financial support in Tokyo attests to the confidence placed in the Afghan Government's strong dedication

to building a sustainable, self-reliable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Proceeding from the principle of the indivisibility of security and of brotherly relations with Afghanistan, Azerbaijan has for many years actively contributed to international efforts in the country. We have participated in the International Security Assistance Force almost from its beginning and have steadily increased our military contribution to it. We believe that capacity-building for Afghan institutions must remain at the heart of international assistance in order to enable the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its sovereign authority in all its functions. For that reason, Azerbaijan has consistently expanded its contribution, both financially and by providing capacity-building assistance in non-military spheres in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my Government's full support for Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, and I reiterate our determination to remain an active contributor to collective efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš and Minister Rassoul for their statements.

I endorse the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

The attacks by Afghan police and soldiers on their trainers and the actions of insurgents should not overshadow deeper, positive trends. The transition is under way and the security of 75 per cent of the Afghan population is now provided by the Afghan National Security Forces. As underscored in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/703), there has been no deterioration of the situation in areas where the transition has taken place. We have seen that in Surobi and Kapisa, where by the end of the year the proven combat-ready Third Brigade of the Afghan National Army will assume its full responsibilities.

Security incidents are down by 30 per cent from the same period last year. The number of civilian victims has also dropped, although not by as much. More than 80 per cent are still caused by insurgents. Afghan security forces have reached their maximum troop strength. We will continue to train Afghan military and police into 2014, to which we will devote a third of our overall aid to Afghanistan. Our sole aim is to leave in place professional, credible and sustainable Afghan

security forces, to be funded entirely by the Afghan State by no later than 2024.

Those developments are complemented by the international community's ongoing long-term support of stability and development in Afghanistan through civilian assistance. That was resoundingly reaffirmed on 8 July at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan. At that time, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs announced an increase in our civilian aid to Afghanistan of 50 per cent over the level of the past five years, to €308 million, focused on agriculture, education, cultural exchange, archaeology, research, economic development, security and health. In accordance with our friendship and cooperation treaty, that aid will be structured according to the Afghan Government's priorities.

The Tokyo Conference was especially significant for the commitments taken on by both sides. The Afghans pledged to work towards good governance; to organize credible, transparent and inclusive elections within the agreed timeframe; to implement international economic recommendations; and to fight corruption and to protect human rights, especially the rights of women. We expect the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in accordance with its mandate, to play its full role in supporting Afghan authorities in that difficult but crucial work.

The regional dynamics critical to Afghanistan's future continue to be marked by contradictory forces. The Istanbul process is now guided by Afghans, with support from neighbouring and partner countries, which will meet in New York on 24 September to stake stock. France has expressed its interest in helping to develop confidence-building measures in counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and natural disaster management. Moreover, like the Secretary-General we follow with concern cross-border military activity in Kunar province and military activities on both sides of the border.

I conclude by commending the support the United Nations lends Afghanistan through its ongoing presence over the course of 60 years and the efforts its staff, led by the Special Representative, who do heroic work under difficult conditions in service of the Afghan people and Government. That support requires resolve, given the budgetary constraints on the United Nations and its presence in multiple areas of crisis, stretching the Organization's limits.

The Afghan Government should increasingly work to maintain that relationship, first of all by guaranteeing security for United Nations and embassy personnel. Let us not forget the United Nations staff members killed at Mazar-i-Sharif, even as we once again see conditions virtually identical to those that caused their deaths. The Afghan authorities should also make full use of the United Nations sanctions regime as a confidence-building measure towards inter-Afghan reconciliation, for example by proposing new listings.

We are certain that the United Nations in general and UNAMA in particular will have a major role to play in Afghanistan in the years to come. We hope that budgetary considerations will not undermine the ability of the Mission to fulfil its core mandate as set out by the Security Council.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I would like to start by joining others in thanking you, Mr. President, for having scheduled today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I would like also to very warmly welcome Mr. Zalmi Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, to the Security Council and thank him for his statement. We thank also the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2012/703) and are appreciative of the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is in the midst of a critical phase of transition where it assumes responsibility for security and governance with the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by the end of 2014. The sustained commitment of the international community to Afghanistan is therefore essential if it is to stand on its own feet.

During the past year, the international community has renewed its commitment to Afghanistan at conferences held in Bonn, Chicago and Tokyo, and at the regional level in Istanbul and Kabul. The Delhi Investment Summit on Afghanistan, held on 28 June and hosted by India, was also an endeavour to contribute to that effort by calling attention to the role and potential of foreign investment and domestic private-sector development in providing a narrative of opportunity and employment to counter the anxiety related to the ISAF drawdown.

As we assist Afghanistan in attaining its long-cherished goal of self-reliance, we also need to bear in mind the fact that the infrastructure of terror is still intact in the region. The Secretary-General's

report rightly notes that "little has changed in the underlying dynamics to mitigate a deep-seated cycle of conflict" (S/2012/703, para. 62). Further, a diminished international presence will have a large financial impact in many areas, which, at least in the short term, may even exacerbate predatory behaviour.

Afghanistan continues to face an existential threat from terrorism, drawing upon ideological, financial and logistical support from beyond its borders. The security situation remains fragile and has been compounded over the past two months by a sharp increase in the variety, spread and intensity of attacks by the Taliban and their backers. Moreover, cross-border shellings have caused large-scale disruptions to normal life and have sparked public outrage.

The Afghan National Security Forces are ill-equipped to repel the challenge without substantial assistance from the international community. We need concerted action to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar e Toiba, and other terrorist and extremist groups.

We welcome the pledges made at the Tokyo Conference of \$16 billion of financial aid through 2015 and to sustain support through 2017 at or near the levels of the past decade. At the same time, we are conscious that these figures represent a baseline, or minimum requirement, for Afghanistan to sustain itself.

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework is a noble effort that we fully support. However, we must not forget that true mutuality can be achieved only at equal levels of capacity. Good governance requires a strong State that has full control over its territory, which is not yet the case in Afghanistan. While good governance must be a necessary component of international assistance to Afghanistan, it is not enough. It must be complemented by strong leadership, the strengthening of the Afghan National Security Forces and the development of an investment regime in Afghanistan that protects the national interest while promoting investment.

India visualizes its partnership with Afghanistan as needs-based and long-term, not conditions-based or transitory. We remain unwavering in our commitment to assisting the people of Afghanistan in their endeavour to build a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous nation.

During the past decade, India has pledged up to \$2 billion in development and humanitarian assistance. We have managed to carry out some of the most economical and cost-effective projects in Afghanistan. The \$500 million assistance announced by our Prime Minister in May 2011 is being spent from 2012 to 2015. The projects under consideration will be in line with the projects suggested under the national priority programmes of the Government of Afghanistan. The pace and nature of the utilization of the present and future Indian assistance will be determined by the preference, comfort level and absorptive capacity of the Afghan Government.

As Afghanistan takes forward the task of national reconciliation even as it assumes full responsibility for security, we fully support efforts aimed at regional confidence-building as a critical component of international efforts to support the country. Enhanced development assistance and foreign investments in Afghanistan and the building of regional linkages will be critical to ensuring an irreversible transition in the country.

The Istanbul "Heart of Asia" process is an important step in that direction. India has also partnered in this regional consensus towards the stability and prosperity of Afghanistan by leading the two commercial confidence-building measures, that is, the measures related to chambers of commerce and commercial opportunities initially agreed upon for implementation in the Istanbul process.

In our view, regional cooperation on projects of multilateral scope and benefit could give an impetus to this scenario. We are fully cognizant of the fact that the economic viability of Afghanistan depends on its fuller integration into its neighbourhood, so that it can regain its historical role as a land bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Eurasia. The development of transport infrastructure and transit arrangements linking Afghanistan to the north, south, east and west, including through the Chabahar port, would benefit not only Afghanistan but the entire Central Asian region by creating trade, transit and investment linkages.

Moving forward, we need a sustained international commitment to strengthen the Afghan Government's capacity for security, governance and economic development. We need to create an enabling environment where the Afghan people can live in peace and security

and decide their future themselves, without outside interference, coercion or intimidation.

We support the good work done by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It is important that amid the cutback in the United Nations footprint in Afghanistan and the reconfiguration of UNAMA due to budgetary constraints, all efforts be made to avoid any adverse impact on its operational capacity and mandate implementation.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Zalmai Rassoul, and thank him for his presentation on the situation in Afghanistan. I should like also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, for his briefing.

To date, Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction process has achieved positive results. The building up of the Afghan National Security Forces is progressing smoothly, thereby laying a solid foundation for a comprehensive takeover of security and defence responsibilities.

Afghanistan is actively developing its economy so as to improve people's livelihoods and is engaging in trade and cooperation with other countries. China welcomes these developments.

China has always firmly supported Afghanistan in its efforts to maintain its national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and to realize enduring peace and stability. We hope that the international community will adhere to the principle of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process and continue to support the Government and the people of Afghanistan in their efforts towards peace and reconstruction and to realize, at an early date, the objective of an Afghanistan governed by Afghans.

With respect to advancing the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan, I should like to stress four points.

First, security, stability, the political process, economic development and national reconciliation all are important aspects of Afghanistan's national reconstruction that need to be pursued with vigour. We support Afghanistan's efforts to enhance its ability to develop autonomously and increase its Government's capacity. Continuing to comprehensively push for an Afghan political and national reconciliation process is

conducive to an early realization of the country's long-term security and stability and will create favourable conditions for economic and social development.

Secondly, the transfer of security responsibilities to Afghan forces must proceed gradually. The withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan by the parties concerned should occur with full consideration for the need to maintain Afghanistan's security and stability. In that process, the international community must give priority to helping the country enhance its security sector capacity-building. China is seriously concerned about continued civilian casualties, especially about reports of the death and injury of women and children in air attacks. All sides should strictly abide by international humanitarian law and relevant international law and effectively protect civilians.

Thirdly, Afghanistan's reconstruction and development require the international community's ongoing support and help. The international community has committed to providing \$16 billion in financial assistance to Afghanistan by 2015. That assistance should be reflected in actual deeds as soon as possible. The international community's assistance to Afghanistan must fully respect the priority areas set out by the country and support the full implementation of the national development strategy.

Fourthly, China strongly supports greater cooperation among countries of the region on the Afghan issue on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. Regional cooperation initiatives should fully respect Afghanistan's sovereignty, prioritize the legitimate concerns of the countries of the region, and be conducted consistently on the basis of adequate consultations. Strengthened regional cooperation can benefit from fully utilizing existing regional mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China supports the United Nations efforts in promoting peacebuilding in Afghanistan. We hope that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Afghan Government will strengthen their coordination and cooperation. We hope that UNAMA will continue to play a central coordination role in the international community's efforts to assist Afghanistan.

China and Afghanistan are friendly neighbours. China will continue to support Afghanistan's peacebuilding, provide help to Afghanistan within

our capacity and support Afghanistan in its efforts to realize peace, stability and development.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate. I warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and thank him for his statement. I would also to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2012/703). Under the leadership of Mr. Kubiš, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is to implement a challenging mandate. But the United Nations role in Afghanistan should adjust to emerging realities, characterized by the projected drawdown of international forces and the onset of the phase of transformation. Similarly, a reduction in the budget of UNAMA must not compromise core objectives of the United Nations in the medium and long-term perspectives.

The Secretary-General's quarterly report under consideration today has provided some mutual insights on the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. I would like to share some of those with the Council; they say a lot and yet need to be pointed out. The fact that it was seen necessary to write in the report that Chairman Rabbani and senior members of the High Peace Council "visited Saudi Arabia and agreed with their Saudi Arabian counterparts on the need to work with Pakistan in advancing the peace process and to utilize the important role of" (S/2012/703, *para. 12*) the ulema and religious leaders, is not necessarily being reflected on in today's debate, but was considered important enough to be stated at an important venue. On 15 July, at a similar event in Kandahar city, "participants adopted a 15-point resolution, emphasizing the need for the rule of law" — and I say that pointedly — "reform of security agencies and improved outreach by provincial peace committees" (*ibid.*, *para. 13*) It then points out that 69 per cent of all incidents took place in Kandahar, Kunar, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Khost and Helmand provinces.

Then the concern increases. UNAMA has expressed concern over the appointment of alleged human rights abusers to positions of responsibility, as well as over several reports of abuse involving Afghan local police personnel. Furthermore, it says that there have been continuing reports of defections from various Afghan security bodies. That includes 17 members of the Afghan local police in the north-western province of

Badghis, who are understood to have joined the Taliban on 24 June, and a further 93 who switched sides on 3 July. This is a worrying development affecting trust during a security transition based on close coordination between Afghans and their foreign mentors. Included in that development is an incident that took place on 17 August in which a local police recruit was understood to be a former insurgent.

That raises a point that needs to be looked at closely here, as we have discussed those matters in other aspects. On the pro-Government side, civilian deaths and injuries caused by air strikes, night raids and other military operations have decreased significantly. But air raids continued to cause more civilian casualties than any other tactic used by pro-Government forces. Furthermore, with regard to the Ministry of Information and Culture's risk of curtailing freedom of speech and increasing Government control of the media, the presidential decree of 27 July, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, "contains language that can potentially restrict the right to receive and impart information, with the media ordered to 'refrain from anti-State propaganda and anything that may lead to negative motivations' " (*ibid.*, para. 35). With regard to the most the important aspect, which no civilized society can do without — I am referring to the judiciary — the report says, "The period also saw the creation of several working groups to revise the Penal Code. Appointments of a new Chief Justice and one member of the Supreme Court, whose terms expired two years ago, are pending." (*ibid.*, para. 43)

There is mention of the increasing narcotics problem, but after hearing so much about the Tokyo Conference, I want to refer to an important element. Given the depth of humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, following the mid-year review, the consolidated appeals process increased to \$448 million to address the life-saving needs of approximately 8.8 million people.

It is worrying that as of 1 August, funding stands at only 33.5 per cent, less than half of what was available during the same period in 2011.

I now turn to the ISAF report, where it talks of the security situation. During the reporting period, insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 6 per cent, compared to the same period in 2011. In the Regional Command South-west, insurgent-initiated attacks have increased by 13 per cent. In the Regional Command South, the insurgent-initiated attacks for the reporting

period have increased by 6 per cent. In the Regional Command North, the insurgent-initiated attacks have increased by 29 per cent. In the Regional Command West, the insurgent-initiated attacks have increased by 46 per cent. The last two cover the furthest side of Afghanistan, miles away from anything close to us.

In the capital, it is good to know what has reduced the entire aggregate. The insurgent-initiated attacks have decreased by 22 per cent for the Kabul area. It now seems that by October, there will be 352,000 troops and police in Afghanistan. Yet, we have this report of the ISAF that I find disconcerting.

I now move to an article from *Foreign Policy* magazine published, I believe, in Washington, D.C. It says that it is incorrect, if not disingenuous, when we say that the Taliban's momentum has been blunted. It continues,

"The Taliban's spear is sharp as ever. Last week, on 14 September, it cut through Camp Bastion, one of the most secure foreign bases in Afghanistan. There . . . it destroyed six jets valued at up to \$180 million."

It continues,

"The U.S. surge is over. All troops brought into Afghanistan after December 2009 will have returned home by the end of this week. But the Taliban surge has just begun."

Sadly, it also says,

"Meanwhile, in Helmand and Kandahar provinces — the heart of [the] surge — nearly 30 per cent of children suffer from acute malnutrition." ("So Much for the Good War" by Arif Rafiq, www.foreignpolicy.com, Sept. 19, 2012)

I will now quote briefly from *The New York Times*, in August. On 9 and 10 August, eight American and British soldiers were killed. On 13 August, there were two more green-on-blue attacks. On 17 August, there were two American Special Forces members shot to death by a new Afghan local police patrol. And in early September, which is of even greater concern to me, American officials said that the training of Afghan local police and special operations forces had been put on hold.

I will move to another aspect which I consider equally serious, as quoted in *The New York Times* on 18 August.

“In one of a series of recent steps, the military decreed that American and NATO service members should always carry a loaded magazine in their weapons, to save precious moments if attacked by Afghan forces. Another initiative, now a priority, is a program named ‘Guardian Angel’ that calls for one or two soldiers to monitor the Afghans during every mission or meeting, officials say.

The ‘angels,’ whose identities are not disclosed to the Afghans, must be prepared to fire on anyone who tries to kill a coalition service member.”

Now, I do not know how everyone will take that. But I have been reading from official documents and two of the most renown publications in America.

The Secretary-General has made an important point on the need to transform security gains into public perception of greater security. He has also expressed the need to factor the financial impact of the withdrawal of international forces.

It remains to be seen whether security and humanitarian risks associated with a possible economic shrinking following the withdrawal, have been addressed forthrightly. The Secretary-General has rightly noted that Afghan peace and reconciliation is essential to avoid protracted conflict and instability. I share that observation in addition to a long-term solution to the challenges that lie on the path of the sustainable reconciliation process, under Afghan ownership.

The process must not be complicated by inexplicable caveats or conditionalities. Sustainability of the reconciliation process can only be ensured if stakeholders share the goal of reconciliation. International partners should facilitate the convergence. The idea of reconciliation, under any coercion, contravenes a fundamental lesson of Afghan history.

We are committed to an Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. We are not only committed, we are supportive of the objectives and work of the Afghan High Peace Council. Our commitment to the reconciliation process was reiterated in a joint statement issued after the visit of our Prime Minister to Kabul in July. We hope that our efforts will be supplemented by meaningful international cooperation based on pragmatism and attention to ground realities.

The security situation in Afghanistan is a matter of paramount importance for Pakistan. Afghanistan’s march on the road to transition, particularly in the

security sector, is not too encouraging, at the moment. While we value the effectiveness of Afghan national security forces, the importance we attach to them is evidenced from our financial contributions made at the Chicago summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Our offers for training and capacity-building in the past are on record.

Despite our bilateral arrangements, often not acknowledged in this venue, Pakistan has sought closer regional engagement with Afghanistan and its international partners on all security-related issues. We continue our active participation in the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan and a number of trilateral and quadrilateral processes manifest our commitment.

We look forward to the senior officials meeting of the Istanbul Process next week in New York. Our ongoing intelligence and military cooperation with Afghan and international counterparts is self-evident. Improvement in military cooperation should be acknowledged by all of the players. We welcome the deliberations of the Tripartite Commission meetings, which resumed in May.

Pakistan is also maintaining a robust presence of our security forces along the international border with Afghanistan. We recently have enhanced our presence and monitoring through check posts and regular patrolling. Our deployment of security along the international border far exceeds the number of international and Afghan forces deployed on the other side, which might also be the reason why so many attacks take place on the western side of Afghanistan. And we continue to be resolute, despite the high human and economic cost of this endeavour.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is often eclipsed by the glare of security and political challenges. We have suffered substantially, and I need not read the figures here, as I had intended to do. But we will have to say that we have shown considerable restraint in the wake of attacks on our check posts across the international border. We will not join the blame game, and we will seek to address those issues with objectivity.

Against this backdrop, cross-border attacks into Pakistan are being actively discussed with ISAF, including the border coordination mechanism, as part of the ongoing coordination and cooperation between Pakistan and ISAF, based on mutual respect and mutual

interest. We hope that such interaction will help end terrorism across border posts. As a matter of interest, on 13 September a flag meeting was held between the two forces to discuss this very issue.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is somewhat unfortunate, as the country continues to suffer from natural calamities, food insecurity and the impact of never-ending conflict. We remain by far the largest contributor to the easing of the humanitarian burden by virtue of hosting more than 2 million registered Afghan refugees. We hope that those refugees' dignified return will be achieved through the implementation of the solution strategy agreed in Geneva in May. In my home of Karachi, we are now facing serious issues resulting from the large numbers of refugees coming together in that southern city. We will nevertheless call for immediate measures to address the current shortfalls in humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan and the Afghan people. That assistance should be insulated from the impact of the financial shortfalls that are so rampant at the United Nations at the moment.

Pakistan is supportive of the counter-narcotics efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Afghanistan. NATO-ISAF operations are also vital to the disruption and neutralization of the narcotics industry and its growing funding streams. Our collective goal must be the complete eradication of cultivation and the progressive elimination of the manufacture and trafficking of higher derivatives. That is not necessarily happening yet, but Pakistan will continue to support bilateral and regional efforts against narcotics.

In conclusion, let me express my confidence that the redoubtable people of Afghanistan will overcome all their pressing challenges and seize new opportunities for a brighter and more prosperous future. Pakistan will remain their committed and steadfast partner.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Germany.

At the outset, I would like to warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan to the Council, and to thank him very much for his statement. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing. He and his colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the country team can count on Germany's firm support in

their dedicated work in what are sometimes difficult circumstances.

I would like to offer our condolences to the families of the victims of the most recent attacks. In one of them, eight South Africans were killed in a particularly malicious attack in Kabul on Tuesday. They were working closely with their colleagues from the German police project team in Afghanistan.

Today I would like to focus on three key issues. The first is that the Tokyo Conference has complemented a series of international conferences on Afghanistan. At those conferences — Bonn, Chicago, Kabul and Tokyo — the Government of Afghanistan and the international community agreed on a long-term partnership and a framework for Afghanistan to assume full responsibility for its security and development. The challenge ahead is now achieving a swift and comprehensive implementation of the decisions taken at those conferences. Germany remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in its efforts to do so and to achieve stability, economic growth and development.

The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework is of paramount importance in achieving Afghanistan's governance and development objectives. Germany looks forward to sustained progress in the five key areas agreed on in Tokyo. We encourage the Afghan Government to finalize its national priority programmes and to transform them into "vehicles for tangible development results", to quote the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/703). My country has pledged \$560 million annually in contributions to the implementation of Afghan Government priorities.

Secondly, regional cooperation and support for Afghanistan have been further strengthened by the Kabul Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference. Agreement on seven concrete confidence-building measures has been achieved, which will contribute to fostering cooperation in the region and thus to stability and prosperity. We look forward to supporting this process. We are offering our specific expertise in the areas of regional infrastructure and chambers of commerce. We welcome the initiative taken by the Government of Afghanistan to hold a meeting for senior officials here in New York in the coming week to take this process a step further.

Thirdly, the number of civilian casualties has been reduced. We welcome this development, which is due mainly to improved standards and measures taken by the

International Security Assistance Force and the Afghan security forces. We encourage our Afghan partners to further strengthen their efforts in that regard as they progressively take over full responsibility for security.

Let me conclude by underlining that the United Nations will continue to play a crucial role during the transformation decade to come. The task for UNAMA is a challenging one — to support preparations for the upcoming elections; to protect and promote gains in the human rights situation, particularly women's rights; and to support the Afghan Government in ensuring effective coordination among donors and other international partners. Germany will therefore continue to lend its full support to UNAMA in implementing its mandate.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): I would first like to thank Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, for his participation in this debate and his comprehensive statement. I would also like to thank Special Representative Kubiš for his comprehensive and informative briefing on the important work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I would further like to express my enormous respect for the Mission staff for their deep commitment and dedication to working on this difficult assignment.

As host and co-Chair of the Tokyo Conference held in July, Japan would like to express its sincere appreciation to all of our partners for helping to make the high-level meeting a success. I would like to reiterate our gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his presence and to Special Representative Kubiš for his untiring dedication to helping with the preparation efforts in Kabul. On 8 July, in the presence of President Karzai and representatives and leaders from more than 80 countries and organizations, including from civil society, we adopted the Tokyo Declaration, in which the international community and Afghanistan reaffirmed their historic partnership in the form of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. In this road map, the Afghan Government committed to achieving more efficiency and transparency in its governance, while the international partners gave their word that they would stand beside Afghanistan in its efforts to gain stability and self-reliance beyond 2015, and also committed to providing more than \$16 billion through 2015. Japan's contribution to socioeconomic

development and security capability enhancement will reach around \$3 billion in about five years. Those reciprocal commitments will be updated through periodical senior official meetings and ministerial-level meetings.

Building on the outcomes of the NATO Summit on security, the Kabul Ministerial meeting on regional cooperation and the Tokyo Conference on development, Afghanistan now has a road map for working towards a stable and prosperous future. Also, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/703), the third tranche of the transition of security responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces is progressing as planned, and it outlines a path to self-reliance for the nation.

In order to realize those road maps, sustained political will and actions must follow. For that to occur, we cannot, first of all, stress enough the necessity of substantively improving the security situation on the ground by strengthening the Afghan National Police and Army. At the same time, however, we have witnessed some recent shocking incidents, including targeted killings of civilians and insider attacks within various Afghan security bodies. Japan renews its call for the Afghan Government, in partnership with the international community, to make further efforts to grapple with the task of stopping the cycle of violence.

In the field of development, we commend the Afghan Government's efforts to devise an implementation plan for the 16 governance targets in the five major areas described in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. We welcome the issuance of the presidential decree on governance as an expression of the Government's firm determination. It is our strong hope that concrete actions will be undertaken and positive changes made on the ground. We look forward to seeing tangible progress before the first ministerial meeting, which the Government of the United Kingdom has kindly agreed to host in 2014.

I would like to express our strong hope that a stronger and more accountable Government in Afghanistan under the committed leadership of President Karzai will be able to achieve lasting stability in the country through commitments fulfilled and follow-up efforts undertaken. In the short term, conducting the upcoming presidential election in a fair and inclusive way is of utmost importance for lending legitimacy to the Government. In the longer term, the predominant task

for a legitimate Afghan Government is to proceed with the peace and reconciliation process.

In that regard, we are encouraged by the positive trend of an increasing number of former anti-Government personnel enrolling in the reintegration process through the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme. As a strong supporter of that reintegration programme, Japan believes that the accumulation of successful cases can support the reconciliation process as a whole and lead to a successful peace process. It is also encouraging to see that non-governmental and civilian actors are making efforts to contribute to the process.

Recalling a series of recent large-scale insurgent attacks against foreign missions, including the one against the Japanese embassy in Kabul in April, the Government of Japan would like to stress once again the importance and urgency of properly securing the safety of members of international organizations, such as United Nations, diplomats, aid workers and, moreover, the general public, in accordance with established international laws and regulations. In that context, we welcome the Security Council press statement issued last Friday. I join my colleagues in calling upon the relevant authorities to protect missions and fully respect their international obligations in that regard.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his comprehensive briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2012/703). I would also like to warmly welcome the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, to New York and to thank him for his insightful statement.

Afghanistan stands at an important crossroads today. As responsibilities are handed over to Afghan authorities at an accelerated rate, significant political and economic challenges remain, many of which have been highlighted in the Special Representative's insightful briefing. Tackling those challenges and building a sustainable, stable Afghanistan is crucial, not only for the future of the Afghan people, but also for peace and stability in the region, Asia and the world. From our point of view, there are three key pillars that will determine the result of the transition and transformation process.

The first pillar is the international community's approach to Afghanistan. A strong display of will from the international community will strengthen the hopes of the Afghan people for the future. From that perspective, we welcome the pledge at the Chicago and Tokyo Conferences of continued commitment to the country's future stability and prosperity in the transformation decade. While we are moving on to the implementation of the Framework based on mutual pledges and commitments, we must remain in touch with the realities and developments on the ground. Meanwhile, the continued engagement of the United Nations in Afghanistan in all fields during the period of transition and post-transition is crucial. We believe that that is also the wish of the Afghan people.

The second pillar is to strengthen the Afghan Government and move towards local ownership. The people and the Government of Afghanistan are at the centre of the transformation process. Empowering them is essential. That is only possible by strengthening governance and the rule of law. We welcome the pledges of the Afghan Government following the Tokyo Conference in that direction. Ensuring the concrete implementation of those pledges with the support of the international community will be a pressing issue in the upcoming months.

Elections are another key element in providing a smooth transition and local ownership. We would like to commend the Afghan efforts and international actors in the area, in particular, the Independent Election Commission, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Development Programme. We also recognize the positive steps taken towards democratization in Afghanistan in the last few years. Finally, a comprehensive peace and reconciliation process under Afghan leadership and ownership is vital. Turkey will continue to support the process in every way possible, with the best interests of the Afghan people in mind.

The third pillar is the regional dimension. The role of Afghanistan's regional partnerships in establishing and sustaining a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan is crucial. Sustained regional engagement remains key to addressing common challenges, such as terrorism, barriers to trade and investment, illicit drugs and refugees.

The Istanbul process, which seeks to find creative, comprehensive and pragmatic solutions to regional solutions, has become an important milestone in that

respect. As the Council well knows, the Istanbul process, which seeks to strengthen Afghan leadership and regional ownership, aspires to collectively enhance political dialogue among all of the Heart of Asia countries in a results-oriented and practical framework. The process recognizes Afghanistan's crucial role and historical position in promoting connectivity and cooperation across the heart of Asia. Indeed, as Special Representative Kubiš pointed out, the Istanbul Process helps define regional assistance based on mutual interests.

We are extremely pleased that the Istanbul process is moving towards a development and implementation phase based on the framework accepted at the Kabul Ministerial Conference on 14 June. Several follow-up meetings were held in the aftermath of the Conference with senior officials, Kabul-based ambassadors and technical-level working groups. The next senior officials meeting will be held here in New York on 24 September.

Turkey, which co-leads the counter-terrorism confidence-building measures implementation process with Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates, hosted a technical working group meeting on 3 September in Ankara. The follow-up meeting took place in the United Arab Emirates on 18 September.

We are also glad to see the concrete progress in other key confidence-building measures (CBMs), underlining the region's commitment to the Istanbul process. Pakistan will host a meeting on disaster management on 20-21 September in Islamabad. India is convening a technical-level meeting on the Chambers of Commerce CBM in New Delhi, I believe my colleague mentioned. The Counter Narcotics CBM, led by the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan, will serve as a crucial tool to further efforts in combating illicit drugs. There are concrete progress and regional commitment on all other CBMs, fostering the spread of regional cooperation.

As Afghanistan's regional and international partners, we should spare no effort in contributing to the vision of a secure, peaceful and self-sufficient Afghanistan. That is to the benefit of us all. Turkey will remain committed to the vision of a safe, secure and prosperous Afghanistan. To that end, Turkey will always remain in solidarity with the Afghan people.

In conclusion, I would like to voice our strong support for the crucial role played by the United Nations

in Afghanistan. I would especially like to commend the valuable efforts of the United Nations and UNAMA, in particular in taking the Istanbul Process further, and to express our heartfelt gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš and his team.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Like others, I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2012/703) and Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing and for the remarkable work that he does under continuing difficult circumstances. I would also like to thank His Excellency Foreign Minister Mr. Zalmay Rassoul for his statement and his presence here today.

The international conferences held in Bonn last year and in Kabul and Tokyo earlier this year, as well as the summit in Chicago, have reaffirmed the partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community for that country's long-term security, economic growth and development. The conferences set out the way forward for Afghanistan to progressively assume responsibility for all aspects of policy and to achieve its development and governance goals.

In this three-monthly statement, we would like to first focus on the latter two goals, highlighting the outcome of the Tokyo Conference. Secondly, in view of the upcoming senior officials meeting, organized by the Government of Afghanistan in New York on 24 September, we want to briefly address regional cooperation. The Tokyo Conference resulted in an agreed mechanism for achieving Afghanistan's development and governance goals, namely, the Mutual Accountability Framework. With others, we believe that mutual accountability is of paramount importance in view of the unprecedented financial support pledged by the international community to Afghanistan.

On our side, we are giving more than €1 billion in development assistance to Afghanistan per year. The EU commitment to Afghanistan is long term, that is, for the transition and beyond. For the period from 2014 to 2020, the European Union will continue to prioritize and to enhance support to Afghanistan. We remain committed to increasing the levels of coordination of that support and to ensuring its alignment with the Government of Afghanistan's priorities, as set out in the national priority programmes. We are also committed to helping Afghans develop the ability to provide their own security. As such, we maintain a strong support to the development of a civilian police force through the European Union Police Mission.

For its part, the Government of Afghanistan has committed to achieving five key development and governance goals: first, representational democracy and equitable elections; secondly, governance, the rule of law and human rights; thirdly, the integrity of public finances and commercial banking; fourthly, government revenues, budget execution and subnational governance; and, fifthly, inclusive and sustained growth and development. The European Union welcomes and supports the renewed progress in those critical areas.

The international community's ability to sustain support for Afghanistan depends on the Afghan Government making real and tangible progress in those areas, as set out in the Tokyo Framework. That not only will increase support for continued aid to Afghanistan, but also is essential for the capacity of the country to absorb the exceptional aid levels that the international community has committed to providing. It will ensure that the Afghan people experience the benefits of that aid.

In that regard, we look forward to the finalization of the national priority programmes, in particular the national priority programme on law and justice for all. That programme will be essential in convincing all Afghan citizens, in particular women, children and minorities, that the Government of Afghanistan is able to deliver justice and that the rule of law will protect their rights. It will also increase the investor confidence necessary to achieve sustained economic growth.

The added delays in designing that support and reform programme are a source of concern due to the programme's key role in delivering the Tokyo Framework commitments. The European Union's continued support to that sector depends on a swift

finalization of that programme. In that regard, we hope the recent changes to the Government of Afghanistan will lead to the finalization of all national priority programmes, as well as the consolidation of the Afghan National Security Forces.

As part of its long-term commitment to Afghanistan, the European Union actively supports regional cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours, both at the political and the project levels. Since 2004, we have contributed more than €65 million to development projects directly aimed at Afghanistan's capacity to benefit from a stronger involvement in the region. I can confirm that we have every intention to stay engaged in that important field in the years to come.

The cooperation of the countries in the region is certainly a key to achieving more stability and prosperity. Like others, we were encouraged by the progress achieved by the countries of the region in defining and agreeing on seven concrete confidence-building measures at the June Kabul Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference. All of those are very important. As the European Union, we, as supporters, committed ourselves to cooperating closely with the Heart of Asia countries on three confidence-building measures, namely on disaster management, counter narcotics and commercial opportunities. We now hope for swift progress in implementation. Together with the Heart of Asia countries, we will now ensure an active follow-up to identify viable projects for cooperation.

It is important to build on the momentum achieved and to focus efforts on implementation. However, it is clear, in our view, that confidence-building measures should be intended to support what we hope will be a growing political process, not to substitute for it.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our full support for the essential role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan as we move beyond the transition. Its work will be of key importance in supporting the preparations for the upcoming elections, monitoring the human rights and humanitarian situation, and making coordination bodies, such as the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, work more effectively.

The aim of our overall strategy in Afghanistan remains clear — to support Afghanistan on its path towards becoming a more peaceful, democratic and prosperous society.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President, for Germany's continuing leadership on Afghanistan here in New York. Allow me to especially welcome the important presence of His Excellency Foreign Minister Rassoul and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš.

2012 will be remembered as the year when the common goal we have of a secure and stable Afghanistan, with strong prospects for long-term economic and social development, was underwritten by unprecedented support from the international community. The commitments pledged at the Chicago summit, and most recently at the Tokyo Conference, give us the best chance at reaching that goal. Such support, which, as we know, included pledges for the Afghan National Security Forces and \$16 billion over four years, underlines the importance of Afghanistan's stability, not just for itself, but for regional and global security. The outcomes of those key meetings send an undiluted message both to the people of Afghanistan and to the insurgency: Afghanistan will not again be abandoned.

My own country has underpinned our bilateral relationship through a comprehensive long-term partnership, increasing our development assistance from \$165 million this year to \$250 million by 2015, and providing \$100 million a year to the Afghan National Security Forces' sustainment. Since the Council last met, we have signed a memorandum of understanding on development cooperation, which provides a long-term framework to ensure the effective implementation of Australia's development partnership with Afghanistan.

We welcome the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and Afghanistan's vision of self-reliance. It is now up to us and the Afghan Government to implement the Framework. Through the Framework, Afghanistan itself now has the tools it needs to make progress on peace and security, to improve governance and economic development, to tackle corruption and protect human rights, and to develop regional cooperation and private-sector and civil society engagement.

We know that the role of the United Nations will become increasingly important as the international military presence is reduced. The presence of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) sends a reassuring signal of the collective resolve to

protect the progress that is being made. We welcome the Secretary-General's assurances in his most recent report (S/2012/703) that despite a substantial decrease in resources to UNAMA, the United Nations commitment for Afghanistan is undiminished, and we ourselves remain a strong supporter of the UNAMA mandate.

The successful conduct of the political transition in 2014, accepted by the Afghan people, is critical to Afghanistan's future stability, and, to this end, credible presidential and parliamentary elections are vital. We welcome the commitment Afghanistan has made to announce its election timetable, consistent with its Constitution and domestic laws, by early 2013. Clearly, however, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure the elections' success. We support the work of the United Nations on elections, and, through our development partnership, Australia is working to promote participation in public debate and Government decision-making, particularly by Afghan women.

The importance of an Afghan-led peace process, the work of the High Peace Council, and the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme were all reinforced at Tokyo. However, the fact is that there has been, unfortunately, little progress in peace talks. Those have effectively stalled.

Despite the challenges, political dialogue will be key to securing Afghanistan's future, and peace cannot be made at the expense of the gains of the past decade, particularly in human rights, democracy or the rights of women and children.

Regional cooperation is also important for security, a peace process and economic development. Australia will continue supporting the "Heart of Asia" process, and we look forward to the next round of meetings here in New York next week.

The process of transferring security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces is proceeding well. While the transition process will inevitably experience challenges, it remains on track, and that must be recognized. The Security Forces' security leadership, as we know, covers 75 per cent of the population. By the middle of next year, the Security Forces will lead the delivery of security across their nation.

Australia welcomes efforts by the Afghan Government and coalition forces to mitigate the threat from insider attacks, which, as we know only too well, have claimed many lives recently, including those of

Australian personnel. As tragic as such incidents are, we must not let them dent our resolve to see our mission through, so Afghanistan does not again provide sanctuary for international terrorism.

To conclude, my Government remains committed to working with the Afghan Government, the Afghan people and our international partners to ensure that, after far too long, the people of Afghanistan can once again enjoy peace and stability. Of course, we all know that this will come only with resolve, strong mutual commitment, relentless hard work and long-term strong commitment. My own country will remain committed to that.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Taalas (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Rassoul and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for their statements.

The pledges made at the Tokyo Conference demonstrated the sustained commitment of the international community to supporting Afghanistan. They were a sign that Afghanistan will not be abandoned after 2014. The Afghan Government and the international community need to concentrate on implementing the outcomes of the Tokyo Conference, with a special reference to mutual accountability. The finalization of national priority programmes is equally important.

Finland has consistently supported Afghanistan. Afghanistan is one of our largest development partners. Our total official development assistance from 2012 to 2016 will be more than 125 million euros. A major part of that aid will be channeled through the United Nations system and the World Bank.

The Tokyo Conference highlighted two priorities for Afghanistan's future development: good governance and human rights. It is crucial for the consolidation of democracy that the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 be credible and transparent. In this regard, the passage of the electoral law and the duties and structure of the Independent Election Commission should be secured within the first quarter of 2013. Every effort should be made to enable the elections to be free and fair. The full and effective

participation of all citizens—women and men alike—is essential.

Good governance, democracy and the rule of law are priorities in Finland's cooperation with Afghanistan. The Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund has been a key financing channel for our aid.

Human rights, particularly women's rights, were another priority in Tokyo. Although remarkable gains have been made, the progress achieved in fulfilling Afghanistan's human rights obligations has not been sufficient. Today, Afghan women still face insecurity in public spaces and at home as well as lack of access to an unbiased justice system and legal representation. The full and equal participation of women at all levels of society is a prerequisite to development, economic success and social stability. We should ensure that human rights, including women and children's rights, remain at the heart of our common strategy for Afghanistan.

In 2010, Finland started a twinning cooperation with Afghanistan on the implementation of the Council's resolutions on women, peace and security. Trilateral cooperation between Finland, Afghanistan and UN-Women is under way, with the Afghan National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan as a goal.

An active civil society plays a central role in developing society. In Afghanistan, civil society can offer valuable support to the Government's efforts to improve the well-being of all Afghans and in fighting corruption.

Finally, I would like reiterate our full support for the dedicated work of the United Nations and its agencies in Afghanistan. In particular, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has a central role in providing good offices to the peace process, promoting and protecting human rights and coordinating international aid efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): This debate comes at the end of a pivotal year for Afghanistan. Over the past 12 months, the international community has been involved in a series of high-level discussions with Afghanistan about its engagement there post-2014. Through conferences in Istanbul, Bonn and Kabul, the Chicago NATO Summit in May and the Tokyo Conference in July, the international community

reaffirmed its commitment to the long-term security, stability and development of a democratic Afghanistan from the end of the transition phase in 2014 through the transformation decade to follow.

Canada joined the international community at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in pledging its support for Afghanistan, particularly in empowering and enabling Afghan women to shape their destiny, by announcing that we will contribute \$227 million in development assistance to Afghanistan from 2015 to 2017. That funding is in addition to the \$300 million in development assistance that Canada is currently contributing through 2014. It also complements our Prime Minister's earlier announcement at the NATO Summit held in May of \$330 million from 2015 to 2017 to help sustain the Afghan National Security Forces. In addition, Canada disbursed over \$20 million in 2011-2012 to key agencies providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

The success achieved in the next decade will be judged in large part by the extent to which Afghanistan is able to establish a functional democracy, based on credible and transparent elections, a professional and efficient civil service, access to justice, respect for the rule of law and the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion.

In recognition of this, Canada is rigorously monitoring the establishment and implementation of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework to support the achievement of Afghanistan's governance and development goals. Canada also appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board to ensure the effective delivery of aid aligned with the Afghan national development strategy and the Government of Afghanistan's national priority programmes.

Canada also turns to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and other leaders of Afghan civil society to ensure that the people of Afghanistan are seeing the results of what their leaders have promised them. Transparency and accountability will be central to ensuring that international funds are used effectively and appropriately.

President Karzai's July 29 decree on Government reform was a helpful first step, but meaningful reform will require consistent and concerted commitment from the highest levels of Government to eliminate corruption and maintain confidence in the public

sector over the long term. There is much work yet to be done. These measures will foster foreign investors' confidence, helping the country to attain economic independence, and we look forward to seeing the Government of Afghanistan follow through on those initiatives.

(spoke in French)

It is equally imperative that the Afghan Government continue to work towards a truly inclusive, just and fair society. In particular, the rights of women and girls must not be overlooked. Rather, they must be integrated through accomplishments that result in the emergence of women leaders among Afghanistan's political leaders, in the Afghan Supreme Court, in the civil service and in civil society.

Canada's ongoing civilian programmes will fully integrate infant and maternal health, increased access to education and justice, and greater participation of women in civil society and political life. The Government of Afghanistan must also remain active in its efforts to improve the lives of women and girls. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to increase awareness and enforcement of the law on the elimination of violence against women. We also encourage Afghanistan to recognize the different effects that conflict has on women and men, and to increase women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Women must not be forsaken for the sake of stability.

It has been a challenging year for those who are working on the ground to improve security in Afghanistan. Although civilian deaths are down, Taliban attacks on civilians continue to take a devastating toll. More than 2,400 civilians have been killed or injured by insurgents in the first half of 2012 alone. As a result of the conflict, a large number of civilians cannot access basic services or humanitarian aid. In addition, aid workers continue to be targeted, and the rising trend of insider attacks, which have taken the lives of 51 International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers so far this year, is deeply troubling. Nevertheless, Canada remains committed to supporting the transition of security responsibilities to the Afghan authorities, in particular as the second-largest contributor of personnel to the NATO training mission in Afghanistan and through our civilian police deployment focused on training the Afghan National Police.

However, Canada recognizes that the conditions necessary for a sustainable peace cannot be achieved through military means alone. That is why Canada supports Afghan-led efforts to reach out to those who renounce violence, respect the Afghan Constitution and sever ties to all terrorist organizations, and to offer to those who do meaningful alternatives to violence within a peaceful and democratic society. It is only through the establishment of an open and fair dialogue among all Afghans that the country will reach a permanent resolution to the conflict.

(spoke in English)

Canada understands that Afghanistan's challenges cannot be addressed in a vacuum. Regional cooperation to address issues related to security, customs enforcement, counter-narcotics and effective border management, including the movement of people, is vital to solidifying the gains made over the last 10 years. Canada has played an active role in addressing these issues by facilitating the Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation process to foster dialogue between the two countries to improve cooperation on border management. We will continue to work with both countries to improve communication and coordination going forward, but with a caveat. Canada calls for

effective implementation of the confidence-building measures established by the parties to the Istanbul Process in June. Those measures underscore the shared responsibility of States for addressing regional issues, including disaster management, counter-terrorism and the commercial development of Afghanistan's economic opportunities so as to make the country more self-sufficient.

As we move forward from transition to transformation, Canada remains committed to working with the Government of Afghanistan, Afghan civil society and regional and international partners to sustain the progress that has been made over the past decade and to help find long-term solutions to build a sustainable peace. This cooperation will enable Afghanistan to build a more peaceful, prosperous, stable and secure country that respects human rights and the rule of law and that will never again be a safe haven for terrorists.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.