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Official Records

President: Mr. Thomson (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 36

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/616)

Draft resolution (A/71/L.13)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.13.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union later today in this debate.

Let me start by expressing our gratitude to all Member States for their constructive cooperation in preparing this year's draft resolution entitled "The situation in Afghanistan" (A/71/L.13). The draft resolution remains a vivid expression of support for Afghanistan and its people by the entire membership of the United Nations. For the first time in years, we have managed to considerably streamline the text, restructure some chapters and add others. We now have a draft resolution that reflects the relations of the international community with Afghanistan in a more concise yet comprehensive way.

The greatest concern expressed in the draft resolution refers to the still-difficult security situation

in Afghanistan. We deeply deplore the high number of civilian lives lost due to cowardly terrorist attacks and incessant fighting. The recent attack on the German Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif is but one of many in a long list of incidents. Our thoughts are with those who perished and were injured in that horrific attack. I would like to take this opportunity to explicitly thank our NATO partners and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces for the courageous help they provided to fend off the terrorist attackers and protect our staff. In that context, I would like to welcome the outcome of the NATO Summit, held in Warsaw, where important contributions and further training for the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces were pledged.

More than 800,000 Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring countries during the course of this year. This poses a great challenge for the Afghan Government and the receiving communities. This year, we have introduced a new chapter on refugees to the draft resolution in order to highlight this important humanitarian problem. I would like to commend the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration for their assistance to the returning refugees and call upon all Member States to support the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to ensure a sustainable reintegration of those returning refugees.

At the same time, many Afghans are still arriving in Europe — young, educated citizens who are badly needed for the reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan. Halting and reversing that trend is in

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the interest of all of us, but especially of Afghanistan itself. The Afghan Government has to provide its people with the prospect of a future in their own country. We therefore strongly encourage the Government of Afghanistan to make further progress on its reform agenda. At the Conference on Afghanistan, held in October in Brussels, the international community demonstrated its support politically and financially in an unparalleled way. Now it is up to the Afghan Government to do its part.

The implementation of political and economic reforms and the fight against corruption are of crucial importance. We welcome the establishment of the national High Council on Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Criminal Justice Centre and look forward to them becoming fully operational. Moreover, as reflected in the draft resolution, preserving and consolidating gains in the protection and promotion of human rights and the equal participation of all members of society, especially women, in all spheres of Afghan life remains critical.

We also noted that the list of regional development and cooperation initiatives and projects mentioned in this year's draft resolution has increased substantially. Germany wholeheartedly encourages greater regional cooperation. We sincerely hope that regional States and organizations will assume greater responsibility in our joint efforts to support Afghanistan in the future. That also applies to an Afghan peace and reconciliation process, which remains the only way to long-term stability in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, let me assure the Assembly that Germany will remain committed to supporting Afghanistan. We will continue our financial assistance and our support for the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in the years ahead, in line with our Brussels and Warsaw commitments.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): It was 70 years ago, two days from today, that Afghanistan's flag was raised on the grounds of the United Nations as its fifty-second Member. Today, I am pleased to stand before the Assembly on behalf of a great nation with the world's support behind us for the unanimous adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.13, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan". Allow me to thank all Member States for their support for the draft resolution.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Harald Braun, Counsellor Peter Neven and the rest of

the team at the Permanent Mission of Germany for so ably leading negotiations on the draft resolution. We are also thankful to the delegations who took part in the negotiations in a constructive spirit, as an expression of their solidarity with and support for Afghanistan. In addition, I wish to thank the Member States that have sponsored the draft resolution, which signifies their continued support for a stable Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's story of resilience and accomplishments against all odds — despite our ongoing struggle against illegalities and stagnation, in particular those crafted and imposed on us by regional orchestrators of violent extremism and terrorism — should be a source of hope and inspiration for those who champion the shared values of a democratic and free society, based on the rule of law, human rights and dignity for all. However, in the current scenario of violent extremism and radicalism threatening our global order, unanimous international consensus and support for Afghanistan are needed in the fight against global terrorism. We hope that through this resolution, Member States will be guided in addressing key issues facing Afghanistan.

To say that Afghanistan has achieved unprecedented progress in the past fifteen years while faced with enormous challenges is not an overstatement. I witnessed this yet again during my visit to Kabul last week, finding a more vibrant and cleaner city with major improvements in waste management. Almost all Member States have been involved in some form in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan since 2001. The giant leap forward in almost all sectors of society would not have been possible without their contribution. The Government and the people of Afghanistan are truly grateful for this support, and we look forward to continuing our joint partnership for prosperity and peace. We will do so on the basis of mutual commitments, under the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework and the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework agreed upon at the recently concluded Brussels Conference.

The outcome of last month's Brussels Conference on Afghanistan was truly a milestone, as it revitalized the essence of our partnership with the international community. The National Unity Government's progress report on the benchmarks of the comprehensive reform agenda laid out our efforts towards a democratic State. We will remain consistently focused on strengthening State institutions, developing self-

reliance, and crafting social services to serve our people. It is therefore imperative that we consolidate these gains as Afghanistan completes its Millennium Development Goals and embarks on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Notwithstanding the transformational effects of our gains for the country, we have faced continued threats from violent extremism and terrorism. In 2016 we have witnessed new security challenges that impinge upon various levels of national, regional and global stability. Currently, multiple conflicts plague many nations with painful stories of suffering, displacement and exodus of refugees in search of safety. Foreign terrorist fighters are on the move, taking advantage of negative State rivalries and operating across regions to establish new footholds in various countries.

In Afghanistan, we have paid a heavy price at the forefront of the global struggle against terrorism. The year 2016 was one of the bloodiest in terms of both civilian and military casualties. We faced a thinly disguised, undeclared war, when a neighbouring State, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of good-neighbourly relations, used the proxy Taliban, including the Haqqani network, Al-Qaida, Da'esh, and others, to orchestrate and conduct attacks with the aim of overrunning a number of provincial capitals and stoking the flames of disunity among the Afghans. Those who seek solace in their intentions to keep Afghanistan bleeding must remember that such actions would bleed them too and warrant international isolation.

The export of foreign terrorist fighters, including Da'esh in parts of Afghanistan, remains a serious concern. Lately, they have sought to expand their brutal presence into northern Afghanistan, often operating in tandem with the Taliban and other affiliate groups. Nevertheless, I am pleased to report that, against enormous odds, our national security forces have heroically confronted this myriad of interconnected extremist groups trained elsewhere and exported to Afghanistan. They have thwarted terrorist militia plans for the capture and control of territory in different parts of the country, repulsing successive attacks in various provinces, including Kunduz and Helmand.

Terrorist militias continue to sustain heavy losses, whereupon they resort to desperate attacks on soft targets, including aid agencies, educational institutions and civilian premises. Last week they

attacked the German Consulate in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, where six civilians were killed and over a hundred injured. The recent attacks are the latest attempts by the terrorist handlers to undermine our stability.

In order to make our security forces more sustainable and provide them with everything needed to face the ever-evolving terrorist tactics, we require continued support from the international community. We note with gratitude the outcomes of the NATO Warsaw Summit, on the basis of which partner countries pledged new commitments for training, equipping, financing and further enhancing the operational capacity of our security forces until the end of 2020. We very much welcome the decision to maintain the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016. The pledges of renewed support have instilled renewed confidence in our armed forces.

A joint international response to combat terrorism can succeed only if the world addresses the key enablers of terrorism. Without foreign planning, safe havens, provision of training and weapons and logistical support, groups like the Taliban would not have the same destructive reach and could be addressed from within the democratic political system of our country. The fact that rogue elements within certain State structures facilitate violent extremist activities is hugely problematic and contrary to the relevant counter-terrorism and sanctions regime resolutions of the United Nations, particularly resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014), 2253 (2015) and 2255 (2015).

A renewed three-tier approach to the United Nations counter-terrorism strategy is needed. At the level of our debates, we ought to address the question of the impact on the growth of terrorism of negative State rivalries and State use of violence in the pursuit of political objectives. At the operational level, we need to enrich existing resolutions or adopt new resolutions to target the drivers of such policies within State structures. At the implementation level, the effective enforcement of the counter-terrorism resolutions and sanctions regimes equally on the Taliban, Al-Qaida and Da'esh, as well as on Member States that provide political and military support to them, can have a significant impact on war and peace in Afghanistan.

President Ghani has asked for the timely inclusion of select Taliban leaders in the sanctions list. We welcome the recent visit of the Sanctions Committee

to Afghanistan, where relevant issues were discussed with the senior leadership. We urge all Member States, in particular countries accommodating terrorists, to actively strengthen mechanisms within State structures for the proper implementation of these resolutions. There is an urgent need for increased and meaningful interaction between the United Nations counter-terrorism bodies and Afghan security agencies.

The National Unity Government has made unremitting efforts to advance the cause of durable peace. This has been a key issue for both President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah. We are determined to bring peace to Afghanistan, with or without the support of those who have thus far failed to proactively support this process. The recently signed peace agreement between the Afghan Government and the leadership of Hizb-e Islami marks our strong commitment to peace and the fact that we are willing to take hard decisions for it.

The implementation process has already begun with the cessation of active hostilities between our national security forces and those loyal to this group, when circumstances permit. We hope this agreement can serve as a model for those Taliban who are ready to give up violence and embrace peace. We believe that the Quadrilateral Coordination Group — comprised of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States of America — can still be a useful platform to facilitate dialogue with the Taliban. Yet achieving any degree of progress requires clear and decisive action to honour commitments within the framework of the Group's road map.

The National Unity Government's efforts to promote regional economic cooperation through the pursuit of common regional objectives and existing processes, organizations and programmes are moving forward. Some of the recently concluded or currently ongoing regional projects are the Chabahar Port, the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline Project and the Central Asia-South Asia power project, as well as the railway line between China and Afghanistan. The Afghan-led Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process are working to strengthen connectivity and increase trade and transit for the benefit of regional prosperity. The region sees in Afghanistan a country that is located in the heart of Asia with the potential to develop as a key player in strengthening economic

ties and cultivating regional connections. Once again, we would like to reiterate that we are willing to work with all neighbouring countries to achieve a shared prosperous future for all.

Good governance has paved the way for notable strides across social indicators. We have created a culture of free speech and tolerance for alternative opinions. The *2016 World Press Freedom Index* ranks Afghanistan fourth best among the 13 countries of South and Central Asia.

Afghanistan is committed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, based on our eight-year plan of action. Women's empowerment has created a more equal society, with women taking key roles in State institutions and various professional fields. Multiple women's protection centres for survivors of domestic violence and children's protection units to prevent recruitment of children in the armed forces are functional. Respect for rule of law and promotion and protection of human rights for all are key values in strengthening the development of our nation.

As a country firmly committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Afghanistan is a candidate for the Human Rights Council for the 2018-2020 term. We look to the support of Member States for our candidacy. We can state with confidence that a vote for Afghanistan will be a vote to strengthen the human rights architecture worldwide.

By strengthening the national consensus for a viable approach to reform our electoral institutions, we are enhancing the credibility and transparency of our future elections and the democratic process in Afghanistan. Recently, the Selection Committee presented a list of candidates to the President from which a select group will be appointed to serve as new commissioners in the electoral bodies. Last week, the leadership of the National Unity Government convened a consultative meeting with a broad spectrum of prominent personalities to exchange views on issues related to holding future elections. Those meetings demonstrate our efforts to enhance national unity and political stability.

The fight against corruption remains our priority. Earlier this week, the Anti-Corruption Criminal Justice Centre for the first time held two trials that were open to the public and monitored by representatives of civil society, the media and national

and international observers. That further signifies the Government's commitment to prosecuting corruption cases among senior officials. In our efforts to promote good governance at all levels, we have also pursued merit-based appointments to achieve more effective, transparent and accountable institutions that are able to serve our people.

Countering the menace of the narcotics trade and breaking down the nexus of criminality and drugs remain crucial objectives for us. Increased insecurity leads to a rise in opium production. In that regard, we are aiming to counter the challenge of illegal narcotics money, which is fuelling extremist activities, through our comprehensive Afghan National Drug Action Plan with the support of our international partners.

Due to a shrinking economy and increasing insecurity, Afghanistan is still one of the largest source countries of refugees. That, along with 485,000 internally displaced persons in 2016, remains a cause of concern. In recent months, we have witnessed the return of around half a million refugees from Pakistan. We urge the Pakistani Government to have a more meaningful dialogue with us on that issue. Given the magnitude of the problem, we invite the international community to support the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs flash appeal to provide for the immediate needs of this population. Currently, the Government is working on a long-term vision for the returnees.

The joint sacrifices made by Afghanistan and our international partners over the past 15 years have brought a profound change in the lives of ordinary Afghans. Together, we have created a situation whereby Afghans look to the future with a great degree of confidence, knowing their country will never again be taken back to the past, when tyranny, extremist ideology and darkness prevailed over justice, democracy and rule of law. Today's Afghanistan is among the most pluralistic societies in our region, and slowly but surely, we are regaining our historic place as a hub of connectivity, flow of people and exchange of innovative ideas among diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Looking ahead, we are confident in our ability to continue to solidify the gains made in a wide array of spheres. Nevertheless, we also realize the road ahead is not devoid of difficulties. In that light, we urge our friends and international partners to stay the course with fortitude and determination in the quest to realize

the vision of a self-reliant and prosperous Afghanistan, one that serves its people and the world. As we move forward, we hope that we can continue to count on international support, in solidarity with the heroic people of my country.

Mr. Mahmaminov (Tajikistan): Tajikistan is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/71/L.13, which we hope will be adopted by consensus, as in previous years. We express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of Germany for facilitating the draft resolution. It is encouraging that all States Members of the United Nations share the common view with regard to the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan and of its key role in the promotion of regional cooperation and integration. There is no doubt that peace and stability and socioeconomic rehabilitation in Afghanistan are crucial for the development and prosperity of the entire region.

Tajikistan supports the efforts of Afghanistan and its people to strengthen and reinforce the progress in tackling the issues of the transition period, including national dialogue and reconciliation. Tajikistan calls for the acceleration of targeted assistance to Afghanistan in economic rehabilitation, the implementation of social programmes and the creation of jobs in the country.

The involvement of Afghanistan in the process of multifaceted regional cooperation contributes to the success of the efforts of the international community. Tajikistan has been engaged in the rehabilitation of social and economic spheres and infrastructure in Afghanistan through connecting the transport arteries of our countries to create an energy bridge, the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000), providing essential commodities and training specialists. The construction of the CASA-1000 electricity transmission line has been launched recently. CASA-1000, which will be implemented jointly with the Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and development partners, will provide an energy connection between Central Asia and South Asia and will contribute to the further development of both regions.

Another important direction of our efforts is towards the creation of a favourable environment for the wide use of the transit potential in Central Asian countries, including Afghanistan. In this context, Tajikistan believes that the establishment of a legal basis and the necessary infrastructure for the free

movement of goods, services and investment in the region are crucial. We therefore consider it important to sign the relevant documents on the utilization and construction of regional framework projects, including the Trade and Transit Agreement between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the construction of the Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Turkmenistan railway.

By implementing national and regional projects on energy, transport and the establishment of free economic zones on the border with Afghanistan, Tajikistan is helping to engage Afghanistan in regional economic integration. These projects are aimed at job creation, poverty eradication and ensuring a favourable environment for development. The Government of Tajikistan will continue its efforts to further strengthen cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and with international partners to support peace, stability and socioeconomic development in our neighbouring country.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida (European Union): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement. I also thank all delegations that have participated in the consultations on draft resolution A/71/L.13, and particularly the German team for so ably facilitating the negotiations. We are looking forward to once again adopting the draft resolution by consensus.

Afghanistan has made considerable political, security, economic and developmental progress over the past decade. The General Assembly resolution highlights many of those advances, for which the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan people deserve much credit. Nevertheless, the gains made are fragile and major challenges remain.

Last month, the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan was successfully concluded. The EU and its member States would like to thank the high-

level representatives of the 75 partner countries and 26 international organizations — including the representatives of a number of United Nations system organizations, particularly Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon — who all came to Brussels and helped to make the Conference a success.

First, it was a success in financial terms: the international community pledged \$15.2 billion in support of Afghanistan's development priorities for the period 2017-2020. Showing its sustained commitment towards Afghanistan, the European Union as a whole pledged €5 billion. These figures surpassed expectations and show the continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan, which is based on the driving principle of mutual accountability between the Afghan Government and international donors.

Secondly, the Brussels Conference was a political success, as it gave a clear sign of support to the National Unity Government to continue its reform path. That includes electoral reforms, administrative reform, economy and governance, human rights and the rights of women and children and the fight against corruption. To that end, cooperation among all Afghan political actors is essential.

The Brussels Conference side event, under the theme "Empowered Women, Prosperous Afghanistan", signalled the strong priority attached to the protection and empowerment of women by the Afghan Government, the EU and the international community. The European Union welcomes the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to achieving the full and equal participation of women in political life and in all Afghan institutions. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to increase efforts to finance and put into action the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We must protect the gains made by Afghan women, as their continued active involvement at all levels of Afghan society and in the negotiations on the future of their country remains a priority for the European Union.

We also welcome the commitment of the Afghan Government to fully implementing the action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and the road map towards compliance, and the progress made. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to continue its cooperation with the United Nations towards full implementation, with the support of the country task force on monitoring and reporting.

On behalf of the European Union and its member States, I would like to reiterate that joint State-building and development efforts in Afghanistan can be sustained only if they are based on reinforced regional cooperation. Significant investments and further cooperation are needed to improve connectivity in the region and unlock growth potential that would benefit Afghanistan and the region as a whole. Besides economic development, security and migration issues are also to be dealt with through a regional approach, and a basis for common regional support for Afghanistan must be found. The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan confirmed a strong interest from the international community in supporting Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries in this endeavour.

The European Union welcomes the undeterred willingness of the Afghan Government to engage with all armed groups in a political process. The only way to find a durable end to the conflict in Afghanistan is through a lasting political settlement. In order to reach a peace settlement, the EU remains fully committed to supporting an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that represents all Afghan citizens and their legitimate interests, preserves Afghanistan's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity and upholds the equal rights of all Afghans under the Constitution of Afghanistan. The EU welcomes all initiatives to create an environment conducive to such a process, particularly the efforts undertaken by the Afghan Government, and calls on all parties to engage in such a process.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework. Those Frameworks pave the way for much-needed tangible progress in terms of poverty reduction and the provision of basic services and public goods to Afghan citizens. To that end, specific actions and inclusive reform approaches are required in sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and rural and urban development, as envisioned in the new national priority programmes.

We welcome the priority that the Afghan Government gives to tackling corruption, which remains a major obstacle to development and stability. In that connection, we welcome the establishment of a High Council on Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Criminal Justice Centre and the National Procurement Commission.

We also welcome the efforts carried out by the Government, together with donors and United Nations agencies and coordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service, in demining the Afghan territory. During the past decade, the EU contributed over €60 million to mine action in Afghanistan. We encourage the Government, in partnership with the international community, to continue pursuing the goal of a mine-free Afghanistan. Such a goal is instrumental for achieving, inter alia, the Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU is alarmed by the high number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, which are at record levels. Improving security remains fundamental for stability and development in Afghanistan. Therefore, we welcome the commitments made at the NATO Warsaw Summit in July in support of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

The past months have also seen a new spike in migration from Afghanistan, while the country is also confronted with an increasing number of returnees, particularly from the neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan, but also from Europe and elsewhere. Support to sustainable reintegration of returnees is a key area of joint commitment under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), adopted on 19 September. The Sustainable Development Goals support the promotion of safe, responsible and orderly migration on the basis of well-managed migration policies. Therefore, we strongly encourage the Afghan Government to show leadership in addressing the needs of displaced people who are returning to Afghanistan.

Wishing to address some of the important challenges linked to migration, the European Union and Afghanistan recently made a joint commitment, called "The Joint Way Forward", to stepping up cooperation in addressing and preventing irregular migration, in full respect for international law, including the principle of non-refoulement.

However, the EU remains convinced that the best way to fight irregular migration is to provide Afghans, especially younger generations, with better jobs and economic prospects through increased economic and financial stability in Afghanistan. Our development cooperation will support that aspect with specific measures. We welcome the recent agreement between the Afghan Government and the International Monetary Fund on the Extended Credit Facility arrangement, which

will participate in improving macroeconomic stability and management in the country. The economic report provided for the Brussels Conference demonstrated that the fiscal and economic policies put in place by the Afghan Government are increasingly successful.

Finally, insecurity and instability are also fuelled by the illicit cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotics, which remain an important concern for the European Union, because they can have severe consequences for Afghanistan — high consumption rates within the population that fuel the illicit economy, the corruption of institutions and the financing of international terrorism. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to continue to pursue a balanced and integrated approach within the framework of its National Drug Action Plan, with the full support of the international community and in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and relevant regional frameworks, such as the Paris Pact initiative.

It is important that the international community remain strongly committed to accompanying Afghanistan towards long-term progress and stability. The European Union will continue to support the transformation process in order to promote the emergence of a fully self-reliant, peaceful, democratic and prosperous society for the benefit of all Afghans.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I would like to start by thanking Germany for leading negotiations on this year's draft resolution (A/71/L.13). I would also like to thank Afghanistan and all other nations that constructively engaged on the text.

The United States is pleased to co-sponsor this year's draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. The draft recognizes that while Afghanistan continues to face grave security, political and development challenges, the commitment of the Afghan Government and the international community to building a secure, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan is firm and unyielding.

The past year has not been an easy one. The Taliban and other armed groups have conducted attacks on provincial capitals, university students and diplomatic missions, including last week's attack on the German Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif and on the Resolute Support Mission base in Bagram. They have targeted citizens, government leaders, humanitarian workers and international partners in a cynical but ultimately

unsuccessful effort to discourage those who seek to build a better life for all Afghans. In the face of such acts, we commend the bravery of the Afghan security forces, which are effectively responding to Taliban attacks and denying them major population centres and critical infrastructure.

The United States continues to believe that the only way to end the conflict, enable a responsible drawdown of international troops and establish the conditions for stability in Afghanistan is through a peace and reconciliation process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. The United States reaffirms its support for the security and development of Afghanistan. We joined allies and partners in demonstrating our strong, continued support for Afghanistan and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces at the NATO Warsaw Summit in July with pledges of renewed assistance through 2020 and a commitment to sustaining NATO's training, advisory and assistance Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016.

In October, the international community reaffirmed its partnership with the Afghan Government through mutual commitments of financial assistance and accountability measures under the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework. We also recognize the importance of stability and security in Afghanistan for the stability and security in the region. We encourage Afghanistan's friends and neighbours to support the Afghan Government and its efforts to bring peace, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan, and we welcome regional development initiatives and other efforts to advance regional cooperation and economic integration.

As the international community has demonstrated a commitment to Afghanistan's future, we look to Afghanistan's Government to continue its efforts to combat corruption, protect human rights, establish effective State services and prepare the legal and administrative framework necessary for democratic national elections. In this regard, we welcome the commitments made by the Afghan Government under the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework. We stand ready to work with President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, the Afghan Government and the Afghan people to advance security, political stability, electoral reform and accountable governance in the coming years.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/71/L.13, on the situation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is in the early stages of its transformation decade, and China commends the positive results of the Afghan National Unity Government's dedicated efforts to promote socioeconomic development and reconciliation. Afghanistan still faces fundamental challenges in the political, economic and security areas. A united, stable, friendly and developing Afghanistan is in the common interest of the international community and the countries in the region. It is the hope of China that the international community will pay close attention to the Afghanistan issue, while continuing to provide support and assistance so as to help Afghanistan to achieve stability and development.

First, we must help Afghanistan to embark on the road to self-owned development. Afghan affairs should ultimately be handled by the Afghan people themselves. The international community should pay continued attention to Afghanistan and do all it can to help the Afghan Government and people, while judiciously respecting that country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and respecting the right of the Afghan people to independently choose their political system and development road. China commends the formulation by the National Unity Government of the National Peace and Development Framework. It is our hope that the political factions in Afghanistan will resolve their differences through dialogue and work together for the noble cause of national development on the basis of the Framework. The international community should help the Afghan Government enhance its capacity-building in the light of the Afghan development strategy and its specific needs

Secondly, we must steadfastly promote the Afghan reconciliation process. Advancing the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned inclusive reconciliation process is the only way to achieve lasting peace and development in the country. The parties concerned in Afghanistan should give priority to the long-term interests of the country and its people and play an active part in political reconciliation. The international community should provide impetus to the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. China supports the continued work by the four-party coordination group of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States, pursuant to United Nations resolutions, to assist the Afghan Government to achieving early talks with the Taliban.

Thirdly, we must help Afghanistan improve its security environment. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces shoulder the primary responsibility for maintaining peace, stability and security there. The international community should help the Forces build up their capacity and strengthen the country's ability to take over its own national defence and to counter and effectively combat terrorism, transnational crime and drug trafficking. Draft resolution A/71/L.13 acknowledges the important contributions made by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other organizations in the region to the maintenance of Afghan security and stability. It is our hope that the countries of the region will continue to promote security cooperation with Afghanistan so as to provide the security environment for the national development of the country.

Fourthly, we must assist Afghanistan in promoting socioeconomic development. The international community should fulfil its commitment to helping Afghanistan in its recovery and capacity-building endeavours so that it will be able to achieve sustainable economic development. Afghanistan enjoys geopolitical and resource advantages, and its prospects for regional economic cooperation are good. Draft resolution A/71/L.13 clearly sets out how the One Belt, One Road initiative will be of great importance to Afghanistan's economic development and regional cooperation. We take discussing, building and sharing together as the building principle of the One Belt, One Road initiative; the spirits of the Silk Road of peaceful cooperation, open inclusiveness, mutual learning, and win-win objective based on mutual benefits as our guidance; and forging communities of common destinies and interests as our goal for cooperation. It is our hope that the countries concerned will be fully mobilized, pursuant to the draft resolution, to jointly move forward the One Belt, One Road initiative to strengthen regional economic cooperation and interconnectivity, provide secure environment for the One Belt, One Road initiative and project implementation, and help Afghanistan to integrate into regional development.

As a good neighbour and friend of Afghanistan, China has always supported that country in its worthy endeavours towards reconstruction and development. China will continue to support Afghanistan in strengthening its security capacity-building and in combating terrorism within the country, and we will also assist the SCO in its efforts towards that end.

We fully support the integration of Afghanistan into regional cooperation. We will work with Afghanistan to implement the China-Afghan Memorandum of Understanding and the One Belt, One Road initiative, and strengthen our cooperation in the areas of economic, trade, energy and infrastructure development.

China stands ready to join with the international community in making an unremitting effort to facilitate the early achievement of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan .

Mr. Yardley (Australia): This year has seen both opportunities and significant challenges for Afghanistan and the international community that stands with it. We saw efforts towards an Afghan-led peace process, action towards elections for Afghans to exercise their democratic rights, and successful meetings that have secured a way forward for international support for Afghanistan. Security, governance, and the reform agenda remain key priorities.

The National Unity Government, under the leadership of President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, has proved resilient even in difficult circumstances. The Afghan people expect upcoming elections to be held in a timely manner. We encourage the Government to continue working to meet those expectations. We commend the advances made so far, as well as the broader progress on economic and judicial reform, and we urge for perseverance in continuing that trend.

We welcome the increasing focus on expanding regional cooperation in this year's draft resolution (A/71/L.13), and we are grateful that Afghanistan's neighbours have affirmed their commitments to supporting Afghanistan in the future. We look to those regional partners to fund and resource their commitments accordingly.

There can be no doubt about the challenges that lie ahead, but security and stability in Afghanistan can be restored only through peace processes. We urge all the parties concerned, including the Taliban, to seek further progress towards peace in 2017. Insecurity and conflict continue to pervade every aspect of life and governance in Afghanistan. Law and order, and effective policing, are key to securing public trust. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces have fought bravely and resolutely, but the insurgency remains defiant. The Afghan population still bears the brunt of this war, as the United Nations reporting on

civilian casualties tells us, and Australia is concerned about this year's extremely high numbers of civilian casualties, which have had a devastating impact on families and communities. Ordinary Afghans deserve better. Much also remains to be accomplished in the area of human rights.

At major international meetings in Warsaw and Brussels, the international community's support for Afghanistan's security and development was affirmed, and Australia has joined its international partners in recommitting to Afghanistan's future through security sector sustainment, the continuation of our fourth largest bilateral aid programme and the extension of our \$80 million annual aid commitment until 2020. We continue to deploy Australian Defence Force personnel to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission. By providing coordination, assistance and reporting, the contribution of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to the country and its people has been profound. We applaud its leadership and dedicated staff and thank them for their service.

Australia remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in close partnership with a responsive and accountable Afghan Government. We would like to thank our partners for their constructive approach to developing today's draft resolution, and Germany and Afghanistan for their key roles in particular. We are pleased to once again be a sponsor of the resolution and look forward to its adoption today by consensus.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the German coordinators for their hard work in preparing the Assembly's annual resolution on Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's complex situation continues to be a major focus for the international community. The increase in the number of civilian casualties is a serious concern. The spread of the influence of the so-called Islamic State is particularly worrying, including its efforts to absorb other armed opposition groups in northern parts of the country and other regions. We believe it is important to prevent militants from crossing into Afghanistan.

Russia will support the adoption today of draft resolution A/71/L.13 by consensus. However, we note that the text did not properly characterize Taliban and Al-Qaida operatives in Afghanistan as terrorists, despite the fact that the terrorist threat in the country has only grown in recent months. We believe that the

widely used term “violent extremism” does not do justice to what is happening in Afghanistan or to the actions of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and the Islamic State. The only correct way to describe their evil deeds is terrorism.

We can only be concerned about the fourfold increase in the land area devoted to drug crops in Afghanistan’s previously relatively well-off northern provinces, noted in the recent *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016* report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). That report also gives an unbiased indication of the sharp, tenfold drop in the volume of drug crops destroyed. We are all aware that the United Nations classifies the spread of Afghan opium as a threat to international peace and stability. In that context, we should recall that beyond the risk it represents, drug production provides terrorists with significant financial support. They receive as much as 40 per cent of their revenue from the drug trade, and the situation is only getting worse, bringing suffering both to Afghanistan itself and to many other countries. We support the efforts of the Afghan authorities to ramp up the fight against drug trafficking, and we urge the foreign military presence and international donor community to help them with this.

For its part, Russia is making a major contribution to the efforts to combat the production and distribution of drugs originating in Afghanistan. In particular, a project of the regional UNODC programme for Afghanistan and its neighbours is under way. We continue to conduct free training in specialized Russian higher-education institutions for Afghan law enforcement agency personnel, including narcotics squads. A joint project training anti-drug personnel from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Central Asian countries — which until 2014 was carried out under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council and was ended not by us but by NATO — is now being implemented by the Russian Federation jointly with UNODC, which is coordinating the project.

We support the Afghan Government’s policies aimed at achieving national reconciliation. We are ready to help in promoting the negotiation process, including showing flexibility on questions related to the possible softening of the sanctions regime of Security Council resolution 1988 (2011) vis-à-vis the Taliban if it does not run counter to the national interests of the Afghan Government.

Unfortunately, so far attempts to reconcile with the Taliban have not had positive results. We believe that the primary responsibility for the currently evolving situation with regard to security and the training of the Afghan security forces lies with the NATO States, which to date have not reached their stated objectives. Many of the other tasks that the International Security Assistance Force — which has now left Afghanistan — was dealing with also remain unresolved.

For our part, we are ready to continue to work together in the future with Afghanistan through structures that have proved their efficacy, particularly the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Afghanistan’s cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) also has good potential for improving our joint counter-terrorism and anti-drug efforts. The constructive roles of the CSTO and SCO are clearly reflected in today’s draft resolution.

Ms. Zahir (Maldives): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/616).

The Maldives notes with concern the mixed trends evident in recent developments in the situation in Afghanistan. On the one hand, there has been progress on the political front, with several key positions filled and, with the assistance of the United Nations, clear steps taken to ensure the successful holding in October of legislative and local elections. The Afghan Government has remained committed to improving the human rights situation, particularly with regard to women and children. It has followed through on its words with concrete actions, and its continued efforts in that area are encouraging.

We are, however, faced with the bleak truth that, over the past 12 months, the situation in Afghanistan has been marked by critical and worrying incidents, especially on the security front. The number of attacks by the Taliban and other armed groups is at its highest level since 2001, and casualties among both security forces and civilians have increased. This comes as the Afghan Government’s efforts to engage the Taliban in talks have stalled amid uncertainty and internal leadership struggles within the Taliban. More troubling is the death toll of civilians and the effect these problems have on innocent people.

The persistent long-term weakness of Afghanistan’s social, political, and economic institutions has proved to be a fertile breeding ground for successive cycles of

conflict. That cycle must be broken if a lasting solution is to be found, and conditions on the ground that are conducive to peace must be created. Among other things, therefore, the international community has an important role to play in giving support to the peace and reconciliation process, capacity-building measures, anti-corruption initiatives, development assistance and the strengthening of civil society. By fostering trust, resilience and cohesion across society, the root drivers of conflict can be dealt with and the Afghan people can realize their long-held aspirations.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to have an impact that extends far beyond its borders. We need look no further for proof of that than at the simple fact that this item has been on the General Assembly's agenda since its thirty-fifth session. Despite dramatic changes in the specific nature of the situation in Afghanistan over the past 36 years, it has remained of sufficient concern to the international community to have been considered by the Assembly in all but two of its sessions since 1980. We must therefore redouble our efforts to promote a culture of peace and cooperation in Afghanistan. In particular, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, the support of the countries of the region is essential in the longer term, both to boost the country's economy and to address issues of peace and security. The Maldives welcomes the possibility of cooperation and collective efforts with regional partners for peace and security and for enhanced economic cooperation and connectivity, including through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Recent events have made it clear that much remains to be done if lasting peace is to be achieved in Afghanistan. At the core of that process are the Afghan people themselves, but they should not and cannot be alone in their efforts. The Maldives believes that it is only with the broadest possible base of support that peace can take firm root in Afghanistan, and it is the duty of the international community to support the Afghan people in building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic nation.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the forthcoming adoption later today of draft resolution A/71/L.13, which provides a clear reaffirmation of the international community's ongoing commitment to supporting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

After more than 15 years of international assistance, it is wonderful that many States recommitted to continuing their support for Afghanistan until 2020 at the Warsaw and Brussels conferences earlier this year. They did so based on a shared recognition that an unstable Afghanistan means instability for the region and for the wider international community, and that Afghanistan's stability will continue to require the support of regional and international partners for the foreseeable future.

However, despite the progress that has been made over the past year, Afghanistan continues to struggle to make meaningful strides in tackling the key drivers of instability. The National Unity Government is still hampered by uncertainty and infighting. The Afghan Parliament's recent dismissal of seven ministers for what appear to be minor administrative failings is cause for concern. We hope those actions do not further compromise the Government's stability or its ability to tackle the many challenges the country faces.

After we saw some reasons for optimism at the end of last year, the peace and reconciliation process with the Taliban appears to have stalled. The Taliban continues to hold the Government of Afghanistan at arm's length while it wages an increasingly bloody war on the Government and the people and on the international presence in the country. New Zealand would like to express its condolences for the recent attacks on German, American and Afghan security officials that killed and injured dozens. Such attacks, and the broader Taliban war, continue to be funded by profits from narcotics trafficking and illicit mining. Concerns have also been mounting about an impending humanitarian crisis in eastern Afghanistan, with the expected return of 1.5 million refugees from Pakistan in the coming months.

The investment of the international community in Afghanistan will be effective only if we make strategic use of all the tools at our disposal to support peace, stability and security. Failure to do so would be to the detriment not only of Afghanistan but of the region and the international community more broadly. Beyond its bilateral commitments, New Zealand has done its part — as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), on sanctions, and of the Council's Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and

entities — to explore what more can be done through those mechanisms to support those goals.

I just returned earlier this week from a visit to Afghanistan to discuss how the sanctions regimes could be utilized more effectively. I welcomed the commitment expressed by many Afghan interlocutors, including President Ghani, to making greater use of the Taliban sanctions regime as a tool for supporting the peace and reconciliation process. I hope those discussions will lead to concrete steps, including further listing of the Taliban leadership and its supporters who benefit from ongoing criminality through narcotics trafficking and illicit mining. I also hope that we will see greater use of the exemption procedures in the sanctions regime for listed persons who are genuinely engaged in the peace process.

New Zealand welcomes the peace agreement reached between the Afghan Government and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hezb-i-Islami. We hope it can serve as an example for broader peace agreements in future. It will be appropriate for the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee to give swift consideration to delisting Gulbuddin Hekmatyar once a request is received from the Afghan Government.

However, for all of those efforts to succeed, Afghanistan's commitment must be matched by others in the region, particularly its immediate neighbours. We welcome the focus on enhancing regional cooperation in today's draft resolution. The very nature of the challenges that Afghanistan faces demands this. The cross-border financial flows that fund insurgency and terrorism in Afghanistan, and the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, cannot be addressed by Afghanistan alone. That requires a collective effort, not least because it will bring a collective benefit. It should be clear to all that a destabilized Afghanistan is in no one's interests.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement.

We welcome the successful completion of the consultations on today's draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13). It not only underscores the progress achieved in Afghanistan so far, but also provides guidelines for the future efforts and responsibilities of both Afghanistan and the international community. We look forward to once again seeing the resolution adopted by consensus, and we are pleased to be one of its sponsors.

During the past 14 years, Afghanistan has gone through a remarkable transition process and achieved considerable progress in many fields. We welcome the dedication and determination of the Afghan Government, the security forces and the people in making genuine efforts to overcome all kinds of challenges. However, those accomplishments are still reversible. The security situation is fragile, and Afghanistan is still at a critical juncture. Therefore, the international community's continuing support to the security and development efforts of the Afghan Government during the transformation decade is vital. We should bear in mind that Afghanistan eventually needs to build its own capacity for the most part. In the meantime, we must extend all the help we can to assist the work of achieving a secure, stable and prosperous future for Afghanistan.

The stability of Afghanistan, and subsequently that of the region, will depend on improved security. Lasting peace in Afghanistan can be achieved only if the peace and reconciliation process is successfully concluded. With this in mind, we welcome the recent peace agreement between the representatives of the Afghan Government and Hezb-i-Islami.

We welcome and encourage the Afghan Government's efforts to bring the reforms to life. We believe that their successful implementation will consolidate the political and social cohesion in the country. Turkey will continue to support the Afghan Government as it implements its security and development agenda as long as our help is needed. We will continue our bilateral assistance in the security and development areas, and we will contribute to NATO's efforts as a framework nation within the Resolute Support Mission.

Turkey's official development assistance to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2015 exceeded \$962 million, representing its single largest development programme ever undertaken. We mainly focus on projects in the fields of education, health, infrastructure and capacity-building for government institutions. Furthermore, at the recent Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, Turkey pledged \$150 million for 2018-2020, which will be used on a project basis in coordination with the Afghan authorities. We believe that a genuine dialogue among the countries of the region is particularly important and necessary. In that regard, Turkey will also continue to contribute to

Afghanistan through multilateral platforms, such as the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the Afghan people deserve a better future. The international community's continued commitment will strengthen their hopes in that regard. It is our joint duty to help Afghanistan to reach that goal.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude for being able to take part in this important debate on the situation in Afghanistan, and I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Harald Braun of Germany and his colleagues for skilfully guiding consultations on draft resolution A/71/L.13, entitled "The Situation in Afghanistan", which we support.

Unfortunately, I must begin my statement by expressing deep concern about the security situation in Afghanistan. The United Nations has reported that there were 2,324 security incidents in October and 14 terrorist attacks in Kabul. Both reflect a growing trend. The international community has reiterated its commitment to providing sustained financial support to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Last month in Brussels, Japan pledged to continue to provide \$130 million in security assistance per year for the next four years. We are aware of the ongoing efforts of those Forces to overcome security challenges, and we do see some improvements. However, the situation on the ground overall is still deteriorating.

Improved security is the most important prerequisite for Afghanistan's development. It is crucial that we see progress on an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, together with significant security improvements. Japan calls upon President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah to cooperate closely in order to strengthen the National Unity Government and achieve reconciliation. The threat of violent extremism is undermining the socioeconomic stability of Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, violent extremism is rooted in and exacerbated by weak governance. In addition to international assistance, efforts by the Government on national reconciliation, administrative reform and fiscal consolidation are essential. The Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework for 2017-2018 sets out clear targets for the Afghan Government, which we strongly urge it to achieve.

Based on the principle of mutual accountability, Japan pledged at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan

to continue assistance of up to ¥40 billion per year for the next four years, starting in 2017. The Brussels Conference and today's resolution demonstrate strong support for Afghanistan. But our work does not end here. We must focus on implementing our commitments. Our ultimate test will be whether Afghanistan achieves self-reliance to the point where donors no longer need to announce multi-year pledges.

Today's resolution contains many initiatives highlighted by the Government and neighbouring countries. Regional cooperation and connectivity will provide a stronger foundation for economic growth in Afghanistan. We eagerly await news on the implementation of those initiatives and commitments, and look forward to welcoming progress in our resolution next year.

In conclusion, let me say that Japan is committed to continuing to assist Afghanistan on its path towards self-reliance and mutually beneficial relations with its neighbours.

Mr. Bonser (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my appreciation for the opportunity to address the General Assembly. Canada thanks Germany for facilitating the draft resolution on the the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13), and for responding successfully to requests made last year for a more streamlined and succinct resolution.

Allow me to proudly state that Canada remains steadfast in its desire for peace and security in Afghanistan and throughout the world. Canada is committed to helping the Afghans create a sustainable future and a country that is well governed, respects human rights and is in control of its own destiny. Canada does not want to see Afghanistan be a haven for terrorism.

(*spoke in English*)

Those are the reasons why Canada pledged \$465 million in security support and development assistance to Afghanistan at the Warsaw NATO Summit in July 2016 for the 2017-2020 period, comprising \$195 million for security and \$270 million for development assistance.

Canada fully supports an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process and thanks the Government of Afghanistan for its efforts to date, despite formidable challenges over the past year. We also welcome the constructive role neighbouring countries are offering to

play towards greater regional cooperation and peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. We note with particular appreciation the important role regional actors can play and have played, alongside the Afghan Government and international organizations, in ensuring the safety and dignity of Afghan refugees. We welcome a continuation of that support for those who are most vulnerable, particularly women and girls.

It is important to emphasize that peace and security cannot be achieved without the active and substantive participation of all members of society, including women and girls. In that regard, we are pleased to see the following elements in the annual resolution on the situation in Afghanistan: commitments to achieving the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of Afghan life, acknowledgement of the vital role women play in the peace process, recognition of child protection and social development needs, and the importance placed on the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of women and children in ongoing security sector reforms. Canada, for its part, will continue to focus on our Women's and Girls' Rights First approach in all of our health, education and human rights programming in Afghanistan.

Canada supports draft resolution A/71/L.13. We stand with the Afghan people as they strive for a more secure and prosperous future and will continue to support them in their pursuit of peace.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement. We all appreciate the work of the delegations that have contributed to the text of the annual draft resolution (A/71/L.13). We especially appreciate the effort by our German colleagues, who once again facilitated negotiations in a highly professional manner.

Slovakia would like to align itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Six weeks ago, leaders of both Afghanistan and the international community met in Brussels at the conference co-organized by the EU and the Government of Afghanistan. That was the biggest international event held in Brussels during the Slovak presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Conference has been widely and justly praised as successful. In terms of participation, 75 countries and 25 organizations expressed their commitment to supporting the people of Afghanistan. In terms of financial assistance, \$15.2 billion have been pledged

to further the development of Afghanistan. And in terms of political vision, the leaders of Afghanistan continue to work together in a constructive manner to maintain an inclusive political process. Those results have provided a solid foundation for the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reform processes in the country.

Given the momentum, progress in the peace restoration and reconciliation process in Afghanistan is more important than ever before. We encourage the Administration in Kabul to further engage in all activities related to the stabilization of Afghanistan, including providing safety and security, good governance, transparency in decision-making, and the improvement of the current living conditions of the Afghan people, with special regard for the younger generations, women and girls.

Afghanistan, which receives a contribution of €300,000 a year from Slovakia, continues to be one of three priority countries on which our development aid is concentrated. Furthermore, at the Brussels Conference, the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, announced a one-off contribution of €500,000.

We focus our assistance strategy primarily on three priority areas: education, agriculture and health care. It is not by chance that we focus our policy on those areas, since we firmly believe that making tangible improvements in the quality of people's lives contributes to the sustainable nature of development.

Education is the integral and essential part of any development effort. The Slovak contribution is aimed at finalizing the construction of two schools, which will then be handed to the Afghan Government. We hope that they will provide employment for many teachers and places of study for hundreds of children. We are also putting our investment in education to good use by providing scholarships for foreign students.

In the area of agriculture, we would like to assist our partners in Afghanistan to fulfil their potential by producing enough food for internal consumption and, as was the case in the past, by profiting from the export of surplus production.

Finally, Slovak assistance focuses on access to health care because, as enshrined in Goal 3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development.

Slovakia is proud to deliver on its pledges, since we are fully aware that at least 75 donors can make a difference. Our efforts will not materialize without the able and inclusive leadership of our Afghan partners. We are looking forward to working with the Administration in Kabul. We are ready to further coordinate our activities with global stakeholders and regional partners. Here in New York, I am personally happy to continue in a constructive and productive dialogue with my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, His Excellency Ambassador Mahmoud Saikal.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): It is often said that the United Nations is about acting together to defend the dignity intrinsic to all human beings by fostering sustainable peace, and that the objective at the United Nations is to work together in solidarity to assist other members of the human family in need. If that is indeed the case, then today's annual debate on the situation in Afghanistan affords us an opportunity to engage in introspection and take stock of whether our actions towards a valued Member State and its brave people conform to the lofty values and goals that we cherish and profess.

It is usual to begin statements on Afghanistan by highlighting the number of civilians, including women and children, who are killed in numerous attacks every day. There are, however, innumerable inspiring stories of common men and women of Afghanistan attempting to make a difference in the most trying circumstances. Those stories get overtaken by news of death and destruction. How many of us know that well-endowed Afghan lifters picked up eight medals in an international powerlifting championship held earlier this year? How many of us have heard of the innovation of two young Afghan brothers, Massoud and Mahmud Hassani, who have designed a low-cost drone, called Mine Kafon, to detect and destroy mines in their country? How many sports enthusiasts among us can point out that the only country to beat the eventual winners of the World T-20 Cricket Championship this year was Afghanistan?

Such stories of common Afghans trying to excel and bring joy and succour to their fellow countrymen and women are not reflected in numbers and percentage points. Each month, as the percentage of children killed and of attacks on civilians and schools increases, we witness the silencing of many who, had they lived, could have transformed the future of Afghanistan. We are therefore alarmed at the expansion of the war

theatre in Afghanistan and the significant increase in the number of casualties suffered by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in recent months. We offer our sincere condolences to those affected by the loss of lives and destruction of property in several terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, in which hundreds of innocent people were killed and maimed, including the recent attacks on the United States airbase in Bagram and the German Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The commitments made at the Brussels Conference reflect the international community's willingness to pursue and broaden engagement with Afghanistan, per the needs of the Afghan people. At the Conference, India committed a sum of \$1 billion for capacity-building in education, health, agriculture, skill development, empowerment of women, energy, infrastructure and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Even as we collectively make efforts to rebuild institutions, infrastructure and networks in Afghanistan through cooperative endeavours, there are those who aim to destroy and undermine what is being rebuilt. Groups and individuals that perpetrate violence against the people and the Government of Afghanistan operate from shadowlands entirely outside the fabric of international law. They must not be allowed safe havens and sanctuaries in Afghanistan's neighbourhood. Our collective efforts on that front will go a long way in promoting sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

Draft resolution A/71/L.13, to be adopted today, has very encouraging language on regional cooperation and connectivity. India believes in and is committed to working with Afghanistan and regional countries on restoring a central role for Afghanistan as the land bridge of our region. It is with that goal in mind that India chose Amritsar as the city to host the Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference next month. Amritsar sits on one of Asia's oldest and longest major routes, dating back to the second century B.C.E. Five centuries ago, the modern version of this road was built from Kabul to Kolkata by the Indo-Afghan King Sher Shah Suri. Even today, that same road could become a major artery running through India, across Pakistan and on to Afghanistan. Those with narrow mindsets need to open their hearts and allow arterial roads to be used for Afghan trade to and from everywhere in the region.

The security challenges faced by the Afghan people and Government have not receded. We note that Afghanistan, along with the Resolute Support

Mission, continues to make efforts to combat terrorism. However, the shadowy supporters of some of the terrorist organizations — like the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham, and Al-Qaida and its designated affiliates, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and the Jaysh Muhammad — have not been deterred, as is reflected in the upward trend in the casualty tolls.

The United Nations must do more to send the right message. The inconsistent implementation of the sanctions imposed on some of these terrorist outfits eats away at the authority of the United Nations and needs to be addressed. The leader of the Taliban — a proscribed entity — must be designated as a terrorist individual. The international community is impatient for action. Earlier this week, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani himself asked a delegation of the Security Council Sanctions Committee to include that person, and others like him, in the list of terrorists. Unless the Security Council and its subordinate bodies are part of a cohesive response to global terrorism, they run the risk of becoming marginalized from the safeguarding of the most fundamental security priorities of Member States whose fabric is being torn asunder by terrorists.

Afghanistan's National Unity Government has India's full support for strengthening its defence capabilities. We believe that the international community should stand by the Government and the people of Afghanistan in these difficult times. We believe that the path to reconciliation in Afghanistan should be through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process, in accordance with the internationally accepted red lines, reflecting the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan. At the same time, peace and the peace process cannot be indefinitely postponed. An immediate cessation of violence is necessary, and the international community must redouble its efforts for the peace and reconciliation process to deliver results and to do so quickly. We have to preserve and consolidate the gains made by the people of Afghanistan in the past decade and a half.

We applaud the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It is providing assistance in various sectors, even as Afghanistan is witnessing one of the largest influxes of returning refugees and its security challenges are becoming more complex. However, UNAMA must also squarely confront the difficulties that continue in Afghanistan on account of the safe havens and

sanctuaries that terrorists continue to enjoy beyond Afghanistan's borders.

I conclude by reiterating our best hopes and wishes for the people of Afghanistan who continue to strive for excellence in their cities and spaces, ridden with war and conflict. India places its full faith in the brave and resilient people of Afghanistan. We also lend our full support to the international community's efforts, in furtherance of the positive values and progressive agenda that it is being pursued in Afghanistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): We commend the German delegation for its efforts in skilfully steering the negotiations on the annual resolution on Afghanistan, which the General Assembly will soon adopt, and that Pakistan is co-sponsoring.

The annual General Assembly resolution continues to be a signal and embodiment of the support of the international community for the people and Government of Afghanistan. We support the General Assembly's call on the Afghan Government to continue to work in a spirit of cooperation to achieve meaningful progress for the socioeconomic development of their country. Unity within the Afghan Government is indispensable for it to effectively address the multiple challenges the country faces.

The situation on the ground today is a troubling picture of increasing insecurity, escalating violence, growing civilian casualties and rising threats to Afghanistan's political and economic stability. The presence of large numbers of terrorists, foreign terrorist fighters and militant groups in the vast ungoverned areas of Afghanistan presents an imposing challenge to the long-term stability of Afghanistan. They pose a threat not only to Afghanistan but also to my country and, indeed, the entire region. Afghanistan could once again become a source of global terrorism, with grave implications for the region and the world.

Through the draft resolution (A/71/L.13) that we will adopt today by consensus, we will unanimously and unequivocally affirm that there is no military solution to the prolonged conflict in Afghanistan. Sustainable peace is only possible through a negotiated settlement. That has been Pakistan's consistent and considered position throughout the long war. We are gratified that it is now confirmed by international consensus. A dialogue between the Afghan Government and the Afghan Taliban remains the only way to end Afghanistan's long night of suffering.

While the international community can help in promoting the peace and reconciliation process, the principal responsibility rests with the Afghans themselves. Progress will be assured only when the Afghan parties themselves conclude that there is no military solution to the Afghan war, and work patiently and persistently, through a meaningful dialogue process, to achieve reconciliation and peace at home. The recent agreement between the Afghan Government and the Hezb-i Islami group confirms that negotiations can succeed.

Pakistan is ready to assist in reviving the dialogue process with the Afghan Taliban, which we helped to facilitate in July 2015, at the express wish of President Ashraf Ghani. Unfortunately, that process subsequently stalled for reasons that are well known. However, this setback, though disappointing, should not deter us from renewing our efforts at reconciliation. Pakistan's endeavours to that end can succeed only if the Afghan parties themselves are willing to pursue the path of dialogue with the unequivocal support and participation of all members of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, which includes the United States and China.

For over 35 years, war and strife in Afghanistan have produced grave consequences for my country's security, stability and economic development. Pakistan has been the major victim of terrorism originating from Afghanistan. Through the determined operations of our armed forces, the clear commitment of our political leadership and the popular support of our people, Pakistan has turned the tide against terrorism. Our military operation against the terrorists, conducted by over 200,000 troops, has been as large and effective as any in the world. Our comprehensive national action plan is being progressively implemented.

Unfortunately, Pakistan's campaign against the terrorists is being threatened by external machinations. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its leader, Mullah Fazlullah, continue to enjoy safe havens in Afghanistan. We call on the Afghan Government to take action against the TTP, deny them safe havens and end their agencies' collusion with Pakistan's declared adversary to foment terrorism in Pakistan.

To prevent cross-border attacks, Pakistan has consistently urged the Afghan Government to cooperate in instituting strict controls along the international border, to finalize standard operating procedures that address border management and to support Pakistan's

plan to fence vulnerable points on the border. I wish to reiterate Pakistan's readiness to work with the Afghan Government through the high-level consultation mechanism that was set up to address border issues.

The destinies of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan are intertwined and cemented by age-old bonds of kinship, faith and shared history. Pakistan has offered unprecedented hospitality and support to the brave Afghan people in the past several decades of their travail and tragedy provoked by foreign military interventions. We have opened our hearts and homes to over 3 million Afghan refugees and sustained them for over 35 years with less than adequate support from the international community. We wish to see their safe, dignified and voluntary return to their homeland sooner rather than later.

Pakistan will continue to extend economic and other assistance to promote peace and development in Afghanistan. Our pledge of financial assistance at the recent Brussels Conference is but one indication of our support. Despite the attacks and tensions it faces on its eastern border, Pakistan has decided to attend the Heart of Asia Conference in Amritsar to confirm its commitment to Afghanistan's security and development. Unfortunately, this heart of Asia continues to bleed also because of the stratagems of the host of the forthcoming Conference.

Afghanistan and our region are at another crucial juncture, which may require strategic adjustments. At this moment, it is vital to objectively evaluate the fundamental causes for the deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan, and the nature and sources of terrorism there and in the region. Today, there is need to counter the terrorist threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), from Al-Qaida and from terrorist groups like the TTP that are associated with these global terrorist movements. This is the challenge we must address.

Reconciliation in Afghanistan is being frustrated by local and regional interests that are marginal to the global campaign against ISIS and Al-Qaida-sponsored terrorism. These local interests must be pressed by the international community in a concerted way to negotiate peace and enable us all to defeat the global threat of terrorism.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the fact that again, for another year, the resolution on the situation in Afghanistan

(A/71/L.13) will be adopted by consensus. I wish to acknowledge, at the outset, the splendid part played by the delegation of Germany and the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Saikal.

In a few weeks Afghanistan will enter the third year of the transformation decade. Much progress has been made, and the situation is very complex. I therefore encourage Afghanistan to continue to intensify the reforms adopted, and especially to make progress in creating an environment conducive to increased economic activity. I wish to single out the importance that the Afghan Government has been attaching to the fight against corruption, which is absolutely essential to ensuring development. I also want to underscore the achievements made with regard to civil liberties and human rights, and women's rights. One example is the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which was recently adopted.

Spain welcomes the success of the Brussels Conference, which was convened on 5 October and co-organized by Afghanistan and the European Union, and the substantial financial commitments that were made there.

Security remains a fundamental challenge in Afghanistan. At the recent NATO Summit in Warsaw, the international community's commitment to Afghanistan in this area was renewed until 2020. From this podium, I wish to pay tribute again to the efforts and sacrifices of the members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Spain — which in December, less than a year ago, suffered terrorist violence at first hand, with the loss of lives of two Spanish citizens in an attack on the Spanish Embassy in Kabul — will continue to support those efforts, as it has done to date, as well as those of the Resolute Support Mission of assistance, advice and training for Afghan national forces.

The end of the conflict in Afghanistan necessarily involves a political solution. Spain has supported and will continue to support Afghan-led efforts in favour of peace and reconciliation. We trust that those efforts will soon bear fruit.

In a few weeks, Spain will end another intense two-year period of service to the international community as an elected member of the Security Council. During this period, my country has had the responsibility and honour of acting as penholder on Afghanistan. In assuming that responsibility, we were but being

consistent with the friendship between our two countries and with the commitment made many years ago to the stabilization and transformation of Afghanistan. Spain's commitment to Afghanistan is unwavering and long term and will continue in the coming years.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I associate myself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union,

I thank the Permanent Mission of Germany for its remarkable facilitation work, thanks to which we are in a position today to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.13, on Afghanistan, by consensus. This adoption by consensus is certainly not trivial. It attests to the solidarity of the entire international community with Afghanistan and its people.

Afghanistan has come a long way in 15 years — a difficult road, full of obstacles but also marked by considerable progress. Examples of this are the peaceful political transition two years ago, the encouraging developments in primary school enrolment and the decrease in infant mortality. We must recognize the progress that has been made, even if it does not offset the remaining challenges.

We know that the general framework is still fragile. The security situation remains worrying. The series of deadly attacks, including those on the German Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Bagram base, attest to the precarious state of the security environment. Belgium condemns those terrorist attacks in the strongest terms, and through me extends its condolences to the families and relatives of the victims.

In that context, the support of the international community is crucial. The continuous presence of the United Nations in the country, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the renewed commitment of NATO at its Warsaw Summit on 8 and 9 July, and the confirmation at the 5 October Brussels Conference of ongoing international financing for Afghan development are concrete demonstrations of the type of support that Belgium endorses.

But we also know that the help of the international community, while crucial, cannot by itself bring peace. That is why we encourage every effort aimed at promoting the emergence of a peace process led by Afghans for Afghans. In that regard, we call on all active parties, with the cooperation of regional stakeholders, to make a serious commitment to dialogue towards a

political settlement that will help attain lasting peace and reconciliation.

While the issues of security and reconciliation are vital to the rebuilding of the country, human development is another decisive factor for long-term stabilization. Too many Afghans continue to live in destitution. Can we be surprised that, when faced with violence and poverty, so many of them, especially the youth, choose to emigrate? The best way to staunch the haemorrhaging of that life force is to offer the young generation real prospects for the future. Belgium, for its part, contributes to the United Nations programme facilitating the lasting reintegration of Afghans into their country.

Achieving long-term stability will also depend on respect for human rights, particularly women's rights. We welcome the efforts already carried out by the Afghan Government to combat all forms of violence towards women and girls. However, there is still a considerable road to travel. In any event, women will have to play a key role in all aspects of social, economic and political life, as well as in the process of national reconciliation, peacebuilding and transitional justice. Belgium, for its part, seeks to partner with the Afghan Government in its efforts to protect, empower and integrate women, and contributes financially to the UN-Women country-specific programme.

Another key issue for the future of the country is the protection of children. The escalation of conflict disproportionately affects children. While we recognize the efforts of the Government in the framework of the action plan aimed at curbing the use and recruitment of children in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, we encourage ongoing cooperation with the United Nations to fully implement the provisions of the plan and its road map. In that connection, we call for a general ban on child recruitment and for expanding child protection groups in national police recruitment centres throughout the country.

Finally, the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflicts through suitable programmes is another fundamental factor in ensuring lasting peace and security. That element must not be neglected, as it represents a preventive instrument that will make it possible break the vicious circle of violence. Moreover, we welcome all efforts towards demining and the neutralization of explosive remnants of war that, sadly, often claim children as their primary

victims. Protecting tomorrow's adults is preserving the future.

In conclusion, I call for respect for international humanitarian law, particularly the protection of medical personnel and health facilities, as set forth in Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), adopted on 3 May. That resolution also applies to Afghanistan, where the number of attacks on hospitals and health personnel is unfortunately on the rise.

Belgium reiterates its support for the people and Government of Afghanistan. Today and tomorrow, it will stand by their side in their efforts towards the development and stabilization of their country.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Let me start by thanking our German colleagues for their excellent work, as usual, on the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13), which my delegation is happy to co-sponsor.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, and in my national capacity I should like to make the following points.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the Brussels Conference in October. It renewed the partnership for prosperity and peace between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community, and endorsed the Afghan Government's ambitious reform agenda. Our collective commitment to Afghanistan over the next four years will be critical to ensuring that the country stays on the path to political and economic stability. The unity of Afghanistan's leadership and broad consensus are key to continuing the much-needed reforms, fighting corruption, strengthening the protection of human rights, reforming the electoral process, combating trafficking and tackling the problems of displacement.

The latest report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016* point to a reversal in efforts to tackle illicit drugs. Since 2015, estimated opium production has increased by 43 per cent. Given the impact on development, health, and security, that is a serious cause for alarm and a rallying call for more vigorous action.

As many colleagues have mentioned, building Afghanistan's future will require the inclusive engagement of all actors, including women. Women are increasingly involved in decision-making. We welcome

the progress achieved, including the reintroduction of a 25 per cent quota for women in Parliament. Progress, however, remains uneven, owing to limited institutional capacity and the security situation in Taliban-controlled areas, as well as the lingering culture of impunity. Women activists continue to be threatened, targeted and killed. Physical punishment and even the executions of women still occur, under the pretext of so-called moral crimes. Further progress is obviously needed in the implementation of the national strategy on the elimination of violence against women and other relevant legislation, as well as the national action plan based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

My delegation remains concerned about the situation faced by journalists and other media workers in Afghanistan. The country has made notable progress in that area, yet it remains on the list of the 10 most dangerous countries in the world to be a journalist. Over the past year, the Taliban has assailed journalists with threats, assaults, bombings and kidnappings. A local journalist was beheaded. Freedom of expression and information are integral parts of the democracy that Afghanistan is building with such great sacrifice. We encourage the Afghan authorities to strengthen their efforts to investigate attacks against journalists and related media workers and bring the perpetrators to justice.

My delegation welcomes the peace agreement signed by the Afghan Government and the High Peace Council with Hezb-i Islami Gulbuddin on 26 September and supports its efforts to engage with all armed groups without preconditions. At the same time, as other delegations have noted, the security situation in the country continues to be worrying. Last year saw 11,000 civilian casualties, and the number is expected to be higher this year. One in every four victims was a child. In the first eight months of 2016 alone, Afghan forces saw more than 5,500 of their own killed. Only recently, within the span of a few weeks the Taliban attacked the German Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif, killing at least 4 and wounding 120; the largest United States military base in Afghanistan was attacked; a magnetic sticky bomb exploded under a vehicle in Kabul near the Ministry of Higher Education; and a suicide bomber struck a Government vehicle in an attack claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Our thoughts go out to all those who were affected by those and other attacks, and we express our condolences for the loss of life.

The international community's engagement in assisting and supporting Afghanistan's efforts to provide security for its people could not be more important at this stage. We welcome the agreement signed at the NATO Summit in Warsaw to extend the presence of the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016.

Together with its allies, Lithuania continues to assist Afghanistan in producing professionally trained and equipped defence and security forces. This year, we contributed \$500,000 to the Afghanistan National Army Trust Fund and intend to continue our support to the Afghan National Army. Our military staff is providing assistance within the framework of the Resolute Support Mission in Kabul and Herat. Lithuania welcomes the European Union's commitment to supporting civilian policing in Afghanistan beyond the completion of the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan in 2016.

A stable, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan is a shared priority and interest. Lithuania stands ready to continue supporting the efforts of the Afghan people to achieve that goal.

Mrs. Kanchaveli (Georgia): Georgia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union earlier on today's topic, and I would like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, allow me to thank the other delegations and the delegation of Germany for once again facilitating negotiations on the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan for this year (A/71/L.13). As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, Georgia looks forward to its adoption by consensus at this meeting.

Georgia is privileged to be among those countries that help Afghanistan rebuild the war-torn and violence-plagued country. We remain committed to the development of Afghanistan as a sovereign, democratic, secure and stable State. In that context, we commend the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan aimed at establishing a secure and prosperous country that the Afghan people highly deserve and is in the interest of all of us. The struggle of that brave nation for peace, stability and unity can leave no one indifferent. It is with particular pride that Georgia, despite its small size and the challenges to its own sovereignty and territorial integrity, has contributed for more than a decade to strengthening regional security through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

In recent years, Georgian soldiers have been a part of international forces and have shown outstanding courage, professionalism and dedication, which is a clear demonstration of our nation's commitment to enhancing peace and stability in the region. We are particularly glad to learn that during the recent attack on the German Consulate General in Mazar-e-Sharif, the attackers were successfully fought off by the international security forces, with the Georgian contingent at the forefront. Their professionalism and courage saved many lives.

Georgia joined the counter-terrorist coalition immediately after the horrendous 9/11 attacks, providing its airspace and airports for the transit of coalition forces and personnel to Afghanistan, and was an integral part of the northern distribution network. In 2004, Georgia upgraded its engagement by committing troops and becoming, within several years, the largest non-NATO troop-contributor to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and second-largest per capita troop-contributor after the United States. Even after completion of the ISAF mission in 2014, Georgia continues to provide a sizable contribution to the Resolute Support Mission. Moreover, Georgia is determined to continue its support to international efforts in Afghanistan beyond 2016. Georgia stands ready to offer the Afghan side training and exercise opportunities at Georgian military training centres and to share its experience in defence transformation and reforms.

Besides contributing troops, Georgia is committed to continuing its financial support for the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Georgia has already transferred \$1 million to the fund supporting the Forces and will allocate the last tranche of \$500,000 in the fiscal year 2017, thereby fulfilling its pledge. In July, Georgia also made a new pledge to continue its financial contribution in support of Afghanistan's development from 2018 through 2020.

The road to peace and stability is not an easy one to follow. Bearing in mind all the outstanding efforts and sacrifices that have been made in Afghanistan, we are confident that, with the continued determination of the Afghan Government, the international community should continue building on the gains and further advancing the hard-won progress achieved thus far in Afghanistan and tackle the challenges that remain.

To conclude, let me reiterate that, in that spirit of partnership and focusing on supporting peace, justice and development, Georgia will continue to stand by Afghanistan and the Afghan people in the years to come.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): At the outset, allow me to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement and the German delegation for facilitating negotiations on draft resolution A/71/L.13 in a very comprehensive manner. Italy is a sponsor of the draft resolution and aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Observer of the European Union.

The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan was a significant opportunity to renew the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community, which is indispensable to assuring future development, self-sustaining growth and prosperity for the country, and in particular the people of Afghanistan. We are all aware of how ambitious that goal is, but the stakes are high and Afghanistan cannot afford to fail on the road to reform. To that end, the determination and effectiveness of the National Unity Government's actions are crucial. In the first two years of its term, the Government has attained various encouraging results, but it is absolutely necessary for further concrete steps to be taken in that direction. The cohesiveness of its leaders and the sense of responsibility of all Afghan institutions in that regard are not an option but rather an unavoidable condition.

The relationship of solidarity between the donor community and Afghanistan, renewed in Brussels and prior to that in Tokyo and London, is built on that assumption. In other words, the framework of mutual accountability must be fully respected in order to declare the Afghan Government's ambitious reform and development programmes a success. Therefore, we must make every effort to fight corruption, which represents a formidable obstacle on the road to development and engenders a dangerous public distrust toward national institutions. Electoral reform must be completed and economic governance made more efficient. And a key priority is to improve the status of Afghan women by promoting their rights and their empowerment in every sector and at every level of society. We appreciate that the Afghan Government has expressed its strong commitment to those goals, and in its actions it can continue to count on our full support. Italy recently renewed its tangible support at the Brussels Conference.

Security conditions are a decisive factor in meeting the challenge of preserving and expanding the progress achieved in the past 15 years in Afghanistan. Today the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces are deeply engaged in fighting the actions of hostile terrorist insurgent groups, which are creating growing numbers of civilian victims and internally displaced persons. To help meet that difficult challenge, Italy extends practical support to the Afghan Government's efforts to achieve the security and stability of the country. At the Warsaw NATO Summit, we reaffirmed, together with our NATO partners, our commitment to assisting the Afghan Defence and Security Forces to improve their capacities through our role as framework nation in the context of the Resolute Support Mission. To ensure a lasting peace in Afghanistan, the quest for national reconciliation still remains the primary political objective.

The start of a possible peace process would certainly benefit from a cooperation and convergence framework among those who can play a positive role in achieving that goal. We therefore need to renew diplomatic efforts so that, in particular, a constructive collaboration among the main regional stakeholders can significantly facilitate the conditions for a peace process and trigger a virtuous cycle of stability and development for the benefit of Afghanistan and of the region as a whole.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Egypt commends the adoption by consensus of the annual draft resolution entitled "The situation in Afghanistan" (A/71/L.13), which is very important. As always, we affirm the importance of the central role played by the General Assembly and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in supporting Afghanistan as it moves towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

Central Asia and the Middle East have concomitant interests and a common need for stability. Egypt has always supported the Afghan Government in its fight against terrorism and its efforts to establish sovereignty across all its territory. We also support the Afghan authorities in their political and social endeavours to establish security across their territory and to achieve development and prosperity for all the Afghan people.

Drug-trafficking unquestionably threatens stability and security in Afghanistan and throughout Central Asia. There is therefore a need for the close

coordination of efforts at the regional and international levels to combat drug trafficking, including by the Afghan authorities. Those efforts are an essential part of the fight against terrorism, because drug-trafficking is one of the main sources of financing for terrorist groups and armed militias. In that context, we commend the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and relevant regional bodies to support Afghanistan in resolving that problem, which is thwarting efforts to achieve peace and development in Central Asia as a whole.

The international community is acutely aware of the growing threat that hovers over Afghanistan as a result of the presence in that country of Da'esh, a terrorist group that has extended its tentacles to the eastern part of the country. In the context of national and international counter-terrorism strategies, the fight must be waged against that phenomenon and that presence wherever they are found. Although it enjoys no direct benefit in doing so, Egypt is ready and willing to contribute to the specialized training of the Afghan army and police force to help establish peace and stability across Afghanistan by providing assistance to the National Security Forces as they fight terrorist groups. We hope that we will be able to establish tripartite cooperation programmes under which donors will provide the necessary financing to cover the costs of the specialized security training to which I have just referred.

Egypt welcomes the regional initiatives being spearheaded in that field, especially the decisions taken in the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process and the regional endeavours and measures of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We also commend the positive outcome of the ministerial-level Conference on Afghanistan held last month in Brussels, whose aim was and is to strengthen cooperation in order to face up to the security threat to that strategic part of the world. We emphasize that the interests of Central Asia and the Middle East are inextricably linked, and that we are anxious to continue supporting Afghanistan in the quest for sustained security and stability in the two regions. We will continue to support the Afghan Government's work.

Finally, Egypt, which closely follows security and political developments in Afghanistan, is profoundly convinced that it must assist the process of capacity-building in a country that has suffered so much for decades. We want to support the Afghan Government

as it addresses the difficult challenges of establishing peace, stability, security and sustainable development across the country.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh appreciates the sustained efforts being made to achieve sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan, which deserve the consistent and meaningful support of the international community. It welcomes the undertakings stipulated in the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework for 2018-2020, as agreed at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan held last month. We believe that those forward-looking policy documents could help foster further international partnership towards durable peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

My delegation welcomes the statement delivered by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan this morning, in which he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to working towards an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and development process, with a focus on national security, democratic institution-building and sustainable development. Bangladesh commends the Afghan National Unity Government for its robust commitment to taking forward its political reform agenda, including through electoral reform, the fight against corruption, the promotion of human rights and the protection of civilians.

Bangladesh shares the concerns over the sustained threats posed by terrorists and violent extremists, which take various forms. It is critical that international terrorist groups and foreign terrorist fighters be denied opportunities to gain footholds in Afghanistan and thereby exert their influence across the neighbourhood. We encourage the various regional and plurilateral initiatives, including the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, to work towards a common agenda to effectively address the prevailing and emerging threats of terrorism and violent extremism in Afghanistan. We reiterate the crucial importance of combating transnational organized crime, particularly trafficking in illicit drugs, through enhancing regional cooperation in surveillance, intelligence, investigation and prosecution.

Bangladesh takes note of the progress made in enhancing the recruitment, competence and morale of the Afghan National Security Forces and appreciates their commitment to discharging their responsibilities

in the face of daunting challenges. We welcome the multisectoral contributions of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to strengthening the security, law enforcement and judicial sectors. We also welcome the commitments made at the NATO Warsaw Summit towards further training, equipping, financing and improvement of the operational capacity of the Afghan Security Forces. We underscore the importance of their being realized .

We remain concerned over the disproportionate threats to women and children during armed conflicts and violence, including by terrorists. We urge the international community to extend support to Afghanistan to address the threats posed by improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh continues to attach the highest priority to further widening and deepening relations with our neighbours in the South Asian region. We believe Afghanistan's strategic potential to serve as a regional connectivity hub should be leveraged with the support of all regional countries. That can help revive the historic linkages across our territories and unlock further development opportunities for the 2 billion people of South Asia.

Bangladesh considers itself to be a potential development partner of Afghanistan and remains willing to share its own development experiences. We stand ready to assist Afghanistan in areas such as women's empowerment, non-formal education, community health care, water and sanitation, human resources development, judicial system reforms and social and humanitarian programmes. Bangladesh is also willing to develop customized training and capacity-building programmes for relevant Afghan professionals and experts in areas such as banking and financial sector reform, disaster management, agricultural extension and youth development, with a focus on technical and vocational education. We have offered to provide training to Afghan male and female police personnel, including on peacekeeping. Our two countries are currently working towards further developing and evolving institutional arrangements such as foreign office consultation, trade agreements, cultural exchanges, visa facilitation and air services agreements. Bangladesh offers some scholarships to Afghan students in the field of medicine and other areas of higher studies.

Building Resources across Communities (BRAC), the largest non-governmental organization in Bangladesh, has been working in Afghanistan for several years now and has contributed to development efforts there. Its staff are working in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, with 389 offices reaching out to millions of Afghan people. BRAC is also imparting training to Afghan civil servants in various development sectors, and our Government actively supports BRAC's contribution to Afghan development and reconstruction efforts.

Bangladesh thanks the German delegation for facilitating the work on draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13), and to reiterate our support for it.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by thanking Germany for steering the negotiations on draft resolution A/71/L.13.

As has been the case for several years, terrorist groups have continued their subversive and criminal activities in Afghanistan throughout the past year. My people and Government strongly condemn the perpetrators of the barbaric atrocities that culminated in the bombings of peaceful demonstrations and religious gatherings on 23 July and in mid-October this year and led to hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries. In committing these crimes, the terrorist groups, led by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, Da'esh and their affiliates, are doing everything in their power to prevent the country from returning to normal and continuing on the path of peace and development.

My Government continues to reiterate its support for any Afghan-led peace process, acknowledges peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban and deplores the continuing uncertainty in this regard. At the same time, we condemn any cooperation with the Taliban, as we believe that it will encourage them and other terrorist groups in their odious behaviour and will prove to be counterproductive to the efforts to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Iran has warned and continues to warn about the emergence of Da'esh and its affiliates in Afghanistan. On 23 July, we witnessed the deadliest single incident recorded by the United Nations in Afghanistan since 2001 — a terrorist attack against a demonstration by ethnic Hazaras, for which the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP) claimed responsibility. ISIL-KP and a spectrum of

other terrorist and extremist groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the north and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, appear as an emerging security threat in Afghanistan.

We support the Afghan National Unity Government, as it is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism and is undertaking efforts to stabilize the situation in the country and to keep the people united in this fight. It is imperative that the international community remain steadfast in its support of the Afghan Unity Government, as this continues to be critical if we wish to bring the fight against terrorism and extremism to a successful conclusion and address security, economic and political challenges.

Today, as in the past, strengthening our regional cooperation with Afghanistan is a priority for my Government as a major pathway towards consolidating peace and economic stability in the region. Over the past decade, Iran has spent many millions of dollars and engaged experts to help Afghanistan with the completion of hundreds of projects, ranging from infrastructure to training and capacity-building in human resources, especially through offering hundreds of scholarships each year.

Following the trilateral agreement among Iran, Afghanistan and India to develop the Iranian port of Chabahar, relevant coordination meetings at the level of the governors of the border provinces were held on 25 and 26 July to discuss security and new trade opportunities involving the port. The Afghan Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Tehran on 3 August for discussions on trade, infrastructure, and the presence of Afghan nationals in Iran. The Afghan National Security Adviser visited Iran on 6 and 7 August to discuss border security and countering violent extremism. The fifth Afghanistan-Iran Joint Economic Commission was held on 10 August in Tehran. Iran and Afghanistan are also committed to increasing their transport connectivity, with special emphasis on the Khaf-Herat Railway, a 78-mile railway project in Farah and a second bridge over the Hirmand River.

Narcotic drugs continue to be a real threat to this region and many other parts of the globe. It is a very serious issue for my Government and Iranian society, as it is for many other Governments and societies. We therefore believe that it should be taken very seriously by the international community and addressed in a comprehensive manner. Any increase in narcotics is a

reflection of prevailing insecurity and poverty. Strong support and commitment from international donors, Afghan authorities and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are essential to deterring the menace of narcotics as a social health challenge and, more important, as a major source of income for extremist and terrorist groups.

Iran continues to participate in the work of the Tripartite Commission in order to plan for the voluntary, safe, dignified and gradual repatriation of Afghan refugees. We welcome any effort to help to overcome the current obstacles, including the main reintegration challenges faced by returnees, and to formulate a comprehensive voluntary repatriation and reintegration strategy. Success in voluntary repatriation depends first and foremost on fulfilling the reasonable needs of repatriated refugees in Afghanistan, and for that purpose it is essential to mobilize additional international support.

Meanwhile, we continue to support hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees in Iran and to provide them with access to education and medical services. Last year, we enrolled 386,000 Afghan students in our schools and universities, regardless of their legal status. In the fields of health care and medical services, we continue to provide services to hundreds of thousands of refugees each year. In some areas, the number of Afghan refugees receiving those services exceeds the number of Iranians.

Iran continues to fully support the promotion of security, stability and comprehensive and sustainable development in Afghanistan, since we believe that a peaceful and secure Afghanistan will greatly contribute to the security of our borders and our neighbourhood. We support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the various United Nations agencies in their efforts to provide development and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan through a genuine, committed and sustained partnership of the United Nations with Afghanistan, as set forth in the final report of the Tripartite Review Commission on the United Nations in Afghanistan. We need to utilize the UNAMA mandate and its good offices to strengthen national institutions and capacities in priority areas, as requested by the Government.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): First of all, we express our gratitude to the delegation of Germany for facilitating the negotiations on the draft resolution

on Afghanistan (A/71/L.13). As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Kazakhstan reiterates its unfailing commitment to enhancing peace, security and development in Afghanistan. We believe that this in turn will strengthen stability in the region, of which Afghanistan forms an integral and extremely important part.

My delegation acknowledges the important role of the United Nations and of regional and international stakeholders in contributing international assistance to Afghanistan. My delegation therefore commends the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), as well as of regional organizations, which are aimed at achieving economic stability, peaceful development, the rule of law and good governance in Afghanistan.

The Government of Kazakhstan has always contributed to peace, reconstruction and capacity-building in Afghanistan. It has pledged to increase its cooperation with other actors and with the Government of the country in the work of State-building, within the framework of political, economic and social advancement. We therefore support the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, which strive to achieve structural reform and to put in place an accountable and effective Government, as agreed at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan last month. We are deeply convinced that Afghanistan's high potential, in terms of both its human capital and its natural resources, will transform the State into a key country of the region. We therefore call on the global community to support every effort to ensure its stability, so that it will be able to attract foreign investment and thereby boost the Afghan economy.

The threats posed by extremist groups in the region compel us to be proactive in supporting the Afghan Government and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. We believe that the fight against drug trafficking, which is a key source for financing terrorism, can be effective not only through enhanced cooperation among our law enforcement agencies, but also by providing market incentives for cultivating agricultural products other than the opium poppy in Afghanistan. We support the work of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre in combating the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, and call upon Member States to cooperate closely in that regard.

Kazakhstan was among the first supporters of the Northern Distribution Network's New Silk Road initiative and the Silk Road Economic Belt, which are being implemented within the framework of the Asian Development Bank's Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme. We are convinced that they will provide greater access to Afghanistan for foreign investors and will create favourable external conditions for Afghanistan's economic growth.

In that regard, we welcome the continued commitment of the international community to supporting the stability and development of Afghanistan and further improving relations and interaction between Afghanistan and its neighbours. We support the framework of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. We are convinced that closer cooperation of regional organizations will contribute to the peace and security and development of Afghanistan.

In cooperation with Japan and the United Nations Development Programme, in August 2016 we started to provide policy support and capacity development for gender equality in Afghanistan. On a bilateral level, we provide humanitarian aid and technical assistance to Afghanistan, as well as offering an extensive scholarship programme for thousands of Afghan students to study medicine, science, engineering and public administration at universities in Kazakhstan.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's consistent support for Afghanistan in its determination to follow a path of stability, security and sustainable economic development.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for having convened this plenary meeting. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement and the delegation of Germany for facilitating the negotiations on the draft resolution concerning the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13), which Azerbaijan is pleased to co-sponsor.

Azerbaijan commends the efforts of the National Unity Government of Afghanistan towards implementing political, economic and social reforms and addressing complex security challenges facing the country. It is important to maintain the progress attained so far, and that requires strong commitment on the part of both Afghanistan and its international partners.

Azerbaijan will continue to support the stabilization, peaceful reconstruction and development of Afghanistan through bilateral cooperation and the relevant multilateral international and regional formats. Azerbaijan has participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) almost from its beginning and has steadily increased its military contribution to ISAF. Our efforts also include delivering assistance to Afghanistan in the military, security, mine-action, law-enforcement and education spheres, among others, as well as continuing to make a contribution to the Resolute Support Mission by providing troops, multimodal transport, transit, training and financial aid.

On 7 September, the President of Azerbaijan approved an agreement between the Governments of Azerbaijan and Afghanistan on military assistance. Azerbaijan participates in relevant international and regional political initiatives aimed at promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, including the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. We also support Afghanistan's efforts at integrating into the regional and global economy and at reviving trade with its neighbours and beyond through increased regional connectivity.

Over the years, Azerbaijan has fostered regional cooperation and successfully developed transregional infrastructure with multimodal capabilities along the East-West and North-South axes. The Baku International Sea Trade Port and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, now near completion — projects which the Central Asian countries are involved in — will contribute to further developing transport and transit capacities for use by Afghanistan and other countries in the region.

The well-being and prosperity of Afghanistan, economic growth and regional cooperation are interlinked and dependent on the security situation in the country and the region. We must demonstrate our resolve and strong will to continue jointly addressing the security challenges which the country continues to face, and to enhance regional cooperation to that end. Afghanistan's strengthened dialogue and cooperation with its immediate neighbours and other regional partners on a wide range of issues — including peace and reconciliation, regional security, economic development and humanitarian assistance — are essential for the peaceful and stable future of the country and the region. Continued regional and international commitment and assistance to Afghanistan are essential for fulfilling its aspiration to achieve long-term peace, stability and prosperity.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Azerbaijan's support for Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. We wish the Government of Afghanistan every success in its efforts to achieve a unified, peaceful and prosperous future for the country.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): Allow me to begin by expressing my gratitude to the President for convening this important annual debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I wish to the Permanent Mission of Germany for all its efforts, culminating in the consensus draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/71/L.13), which Bulgaria has co-sponsored. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Saikal, and his team for playing an active role in achieving consensus on the resolution.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union and its member States.

We reiterate the emphasis placed on the two important international conferences that took place in 2016: the NATO Warsaw Summit in July, and the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October. Both conferences reconfirmed our commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2016, be it military, political or through development assistance.

The Warsaw Summit sent a clear message of continuity on the part of the allies and the NATO operational partners regarding their support for long-term security and stability in Afghanistan. Bulgaria remains committed to NATO efforts in Afghanistan, including through participation in the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016 at current troop levels and locations, as well as through financial contributions to the Afghanistan National Army Trust Fund for the period 2018-2020.

The Brussels Conference provided another valuable opportunity to reaffirm the commitments of the Afghan Government to reform and stabilization and endorsed the National Peace and Development Framework. In Brussels, we reconfirmed our political and financial support for Afghan reconstruction and sustainable development until 2020, at or near current levels, depending on the pace of reforms in Afghanistan and in compliance with the principle of mutual accountability. Preserving unity within the Afghan Government will be of crucial importance for the political stability of the country and for delivering on the commitments made in Brussels.

The peace and reconciliation process remains a major prerequisite for building a secure and stable Afghanistan. We welcome the agreement between the Afghan authorities and Hezb-i Islami, and we hope it can serve as a stimulus for other groups to engage in constructive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace talks. Regional cooperation is also essential, since no sustainable progress can be achieved in the reconstruction and reform process unless Afghanistan and the regional actors engage in a credible manner to solve the existing problems and develop mutually beneficial links.

Bulgaria is considering enhancing its engagement in initiatives aimed at countering the root causes of conflicts and migration from Afghanistan. We believe that that challenge should be addressed by stepping up cooperation on the control and management of migrant flows. Bulgaria attaches great importance to the Joint Way Forward on migration issues between the European Union and Afghanistan — an important political document that will pave the way for finding a solution to the migration problem.

Bulgaria has been a long-standing partner of Afghanistan, having contributed significantly in the fields of security, justice and development. Within the framework of Bulgaria's official development assistance, we continue supporting Afghanistan as one of our main partner countries, with a view to increasing Afghanistan's administrative capacity, combating drug trafficking by training Afghan police officers, and protecting the rights of women and children. These are crucial elements for the sustainable socioeconomic development of Afghanistan. At the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, Bulgaria announced that it was considering new bilateral projects and commitments beyond 2016. We will continue to support Afghanistan and its people in that same spirit of partnership.

The Acting President: (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the issue.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/71/L.13, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution

A/71/L.13, and in addition to those delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.13. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/70/L.13 was adopted (resolution 71/9).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.