



Security Council

Distr.: General
24 June 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 24 June 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Deborah Lyons, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Ghada Fathi Ismail Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, and Mary Akrami, Executive Director of Afghan Women's Network, as well as the statements delivered by Eva-Maria Liimets, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Ireland, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs of India, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States and Member of President Biden's Cabinet, Audun Halvorsen, Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and by the representatives of China, France, Kenya, Mexico, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam in connection with the videoconference on "The situation in Afghanistan" convened on Tuesday, 22 June 2021. A statement was also delivered by Mohammad Haneef Atmar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this videoconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Poland and Turkey.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council ([S/2020/372](#)), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sven **Jürgenson**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons**

I welcome the level of interest on Afghanistan, as shown by this meeting taking place at the foreign minister level today. There could be no better time for this attention.

I cannot overstate to the Council my concern regarding the present situation in Afghanistan. All of the major trends – politics, security, the peace process, the economy, the humanitarian emergency and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – all of these trends are negative or stagnant. If there is a sense of hope, it indeed resides in the fact that previous worst-case predictions did not materialize. But the relentless spirit of the Afghans and their incredible resilience is being severely tested and the possible slide towards dire scenarios is undeniable. What happens in Afghanistan remains of global consequence and the Security Council needs to be fully informed of the gravity of the present situation.

The mid-April announcement that all international troops will be withdrawn in the coming months sent a seismic tremor through the Afghan political system and society at large. The withdrawal decision was expected but its speed – with the majority of troops now already withdrawn – was not. All actors have had to adjust to this new reality that is unfolding.

The withdrawal is one of four parts of the February 2020 agreement between the United States and the Taliban that has indeed been acknowledged by the Council. The agreement generated hope that it would create the space for a peace to be made among Afghans. The foreign troops would be gone, and therefore, rather than fighting one another, Afghans would have the opportunity to come together and find a path to peace. But instead, actions on the battlefield have been far greater than progress at the negotiating table.

And at this critical time, the Afghan public and the diplomatic community in Kabul have been alarmed at the lack of political unity among Afghanistan's political elite. While some of the shortcomings in Government are part of a legacy of putting politics above governance, the lack of unity must be addressed or risks contributing to further Taliban territorial advances. We are cautiously encouraged, however, by recent moves by President Ghani and his Government and the other political leaders to come together to discuss pressing security issues and demonstrate unity. The real test will though be on whether unity in Kabul serves to further reinforce the peace process and strengthen state institutions.

The Council has heard me speak of the continuous increase in violence over the past year, even as the peace talks began in Doha in September. The Taliban's recent advances are even more significant and are a result of an intensified military campaign. More than 50 of Afghanistan's 370 districts have fallen since the beginning of May. Most districts that have been taken surround provincial capitals, suggesting that the Taliban are positioning themselves to try and take these capitals once foreign forces are fully withdrawn. This military campaign runs directly counter to recent statements by the head of the Taliban Political Commission that, and I quote, "We are committed to forging ahead with the other sides in an atmosphere of mutual respect and reach an agreement."

For the Taliban to continue this intensive military campaign would be a tragic course of action. It would lead to increased and prolonged violence that would extend the suffering of the Afghan people and threaten to destroy much of what has been built and hard won in the past 20 years. It should be emphatically clear that any efforts

to install a militarily imposed government in Kabul would go against the will of the Afghan people, and against the stated positions of the regional countries and the broader international community.

We had hoped to accelerate the stalled negotiations in Doha through a conference in Istanbul in April that would have been co-hosted by Turkey, Qatar and the United Nations. The Republic's team was prepared to attend the conference; however, the Taliban never did officially respond to the invitation. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to work within our mandate and, in cooperation with Member States, to find ways to move forward in the negotiations. But the drivers of conflict seem for now to overwhelm the reasonable and hoped-for modalities of negotiation.

Even without the conflict dynamics I have described, Afghanistan would be a country facing multiple crises. Almost one third of Afghans face emergency levels of food insecurity, while this year's drought worsens, and internal displacements increase. The World Bank has estimated that as a result of the conflict, and the severe third wave of COVID-19, the drought, the weakened social fabric and other factors, Afghanistan's poverty rate could rise from 50 per cent to more than 70 per cent. This frightening prospect highlights the importance of humanitarian aid provided from all countries. However, in spite of recent contributions, the \$1.3 billion humanitarian appeal for 2021 is still only 30 per cent funded.

As always, it is ordinary Afghans who pay the heaviest price. As fighting intensifies, the situation for civilians is ever worsening. Civilian casualties increased by 29 per cent in the first quarter of 2021 compared with the same period last year. Notably, and sadly, women casualties increased by 37 per cent and child casualties by 23 per cent. Parties must immediately take steps to further implement civilian protection measures. Civilians are deliberately and routinely targeted in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Given the enormous suffering, UNAMA stresses the importance of putting victims and their needs at the forefront of the peace negotiations. This must include specific protections for minorities. The ongoing, frequent attacks against the Hazara community in Kabul are a terrible reminder of how the overall conflict is being used to target certain groups.

As the Council knows, preserving the rights of women remains a paramount concern and must not be used as a bargaining chip at the negotiating table. Men's rights are not negotiable. Women's rights are not negotiable. Human rights are not negotiable. Who knows this better than the Council? The international community and the regional countries, in particular, must reiterate the importance of these rights in the peace negotiations.

Afghanistan's young people – now the most educated generation in the history of the country – are being deprived of their future, a future which they are seeking to build through education to contribute to their country's development. Instead, they are drawn into war.

Let me illustrate with three examples. Amid the rising violence, three attacks stand out that expose the tragic nature of this conflict and the heightened urgency of ending it. First of all was the 8 May attack on girls who were making their way home after a day at school in a majority-Hazara area of Kabul that killed nearly 100 young female students. The conscience of the world was rightly shocked. Grown men with bombs attacked little girls with schoolbooks. Earlier this month, 11 humanitarian deminers were killed and 15 injured in Baghlan Province. A week later, individual but coordinated attacks in Nangarhar targeted polio vaccinators, killing five and injuring more. These are not just attacks against the individuals, but these are attacks against

the very future of Afghanistan – against girls who want to educate themselves, against experienced deminers who simply want to clear the land to allow people to farm without fear, and against vaccinators risking their lives to combat the scourge of polio so Afghan children do not suffer.

So, what is to be done?

There is still time, barely but still time, to prevent the worst-case scenario from materializing. Enough has been built in Afghanistan to allow further building – if only there can be peace. One of the key objectives of UNAMA during this period of uncertainty is to continue to work with all partners to ensure the continuity of those institutions that support the well-being of all Afghans. Any future Government that results from a negotiation cannot start from nothing. It is my sincere hope that the Taliban understand this as much as the Government in Kabul does.

UNAMA has also heard the many voices that are urging us to play a greater role in the peace process, and we are prepared and equipped to do so if the parties commit to real negotiations and together agree on a role for the United Nations.

We are also working more closely and intensely with the regional countries. In my discussions within the region over the past year, and particularly at the recent Heart of Asia Summit in Dushanbe, it was clear that the regional countries share grave concerns about an extended and fragmented conflict in Afghanistan. These concerns include refugee flows, migrant movement, increased drug smuggling, terrorism, and lost opportunities for economic connectivity and mutually beneficial trade. But these problems will not be relegated to the region alone. As we have all painfully learned, a fragmented conflict creates a more permissive environment for terrorist groups to recruit, finance, plan, and conduct operations with a global reach.

We must accept the reality – increased conflict in Afghanistan means increased insecurity for many other countries, near and far.

Regional countries have an important role to play in helping Afghanistan to stabilize and integrate more fully into the region. I welcome the appointment of Jean Arnault as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues and have been working very closely with him. As well as the existing regional formats, such as the extended troika, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Heart of Asia Process and others should all be further galvanized to reinforce a political and peaceful pathway for Afghanistan.

We can all agree that any future Government of Afghanistan will need, for itself and its citizens, international engagement and support. The contributions of donors will be essential to support the ongoing development and humanitarian needs. This is not the time to weaken our resolve or, worse, to contribute even inadvertently to the ongoing signals of despair.

I have reassured Afghans that the United Nations will not abandon them and will stay the course.

Certainly, every effort must be made now by all of us to avoid the country going down the path of more bloodshed and suffering. Surely there has been enough.

There is only one acceptable direction for Afghanistan – one acceptable direction – away from the battlefield and back to the negotiating table. The Security Council, with the support of the regional countries, must do all it can to push the parties in that direction. The tragic history of conflict need not repeat itself – but left to its own and our inertia it just might.

I very much appreciate the participation of senior people from the capitals, and I look forward once again to the guidance of the members of the Security Council to help this wonderful country.

UNAMA supports the Afghan people and Government to achieve peace and stability. In accordance with its mandate as a political mission, UNAMA backs conflict prevention and resolution, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, as well as strengthening regional cooperation. The Mission supports effective governance, promoting national ownership and accountable institutions that are built on respect for human rights. UNAMA provides “good offices” and other key services, including diplomatic steps that draw on the Organization’s independence, impartiality and integrity to prevent disputes from arising, escalating or spreading. The Mission coordinates international support for Afghan development and humanitarian priorities.

Annex II

Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ghada Fathi Ismail Waly

It is an honour to join Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lyons at this briefing on the situation in Afghanistan at this challenging time, and I am grateful to the presidency of Estonia for inviting me.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Security Council for resolution [2543 \(2020\)](#), which recognized enhanced cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and in support of the Government of Afghanistan, as a priority going forward.

The resolution further highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, governance and the rule of law, including through the fight against corruption – all of which represent the building blocks for an Afghanistan at peace.

A cornerstone action to achieve this aspiration is a well-integrated and balanced strategy to counter the illicit drug trade.

Addressing drug threats is also necessary to tackle the crime-terrorism linkages that have conspired to keep Afghanistan the State with the highest number of terrorism victims in the world.

Taxes on opium, paid by poppy farmers mostly to the Taliban, were valued at \$14.5 million in 2019, based on farm-gate prices. Taxes on the much more lucrative manufacturing and trafficking of opiates may have generated eight times as much.

Income from opium cultivation and production has been estimated at 11 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product.

The total area under opium poppy cultivation in 2020 increased by 37 per cent over the previous year, to an estimated 224,000 hectares, which is the third largest area ever measured. The opium poppy harvest was mostly unaffected by the pandemic, and potential production is estimated at 6,300 tons, accounting for 85 per cent of the world's production.

Farmers are cultivating more and more opium poppy, but incomes have hit rock bottom. The average farm-gate price at harvest time was \$42 per kilo, compared with peak prices of \$275 per kilo in the last decade.

The opium threat has been further compounded by Afghanistan's growing role as a regional source for methamphetamine.

In Iran, seizures of the drug originating from Afghanistan have risen from less than 10 per cent of the total in 2015 to more than 90 per cent in 2019. Seizure data also suggest that manufacture has continued during the pandemic.

As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lyons said in her briefing to you in March, we know from history and from other peace processes that illegal narcotics and the illicit economy threaten peace and security.

Opium poppy cultivation is also an economic dead end.

UNODC asked Afghan farmers where they spend their illicit poppy incomes, and the top three answers are food, medical bills and paying off debt.

Now opium prices are at their lowest level since the beginning of systematic monitoring, leaving desperate people unable to meet basic necessities.

Determined steps are needed to find a more sustainable path.

Renewed political will and international support are prerequisites to empower healthy lives and livelihoods free from violence and crime, backed by a solid commitment to the rule of law and the integrity of public services.

UNODC support to the Government builds upon integrated mandates on drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, and we are ready to elevate our assistance as part of collective efforts to sustain a fragile peace.

Firstly, we must work together to enable more farmers to shift to viable, licit crops.

Opium prices are at historic lows, while the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has pushed up the prices of agricultural products. This has made alternative development more profitable than illicit opium cultivation, and we need to take this opportunity to decisively expand our support.

UNODC promotes alternative development in 20 provinces for more than 60,000 households, which represents 1 out of 4 households involved in drug cultivation.

Our programme has created nearly 28,000 jobs in four years, generating licit income of more than \$15 million; 48 per cent of the beneficiaries have been women. These are positive steps and we need to scale up by integrating alternative development into broader, long-term investment and support.

Secondly, we need to make evidence-based prevention and treatment a priority. Youth in Afghanistan are endangered not only by the world's largest supply of opiates, but by a growing array of synthetic drugs.

UNODC provides assistance and tools for science-based drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, but increased support is urgently needed.

Funding shortages have reduced the number of drug treatment centres in the country from 107 to 86, including the closure of 5 centres for women and children early last year.

Thirdly, I urge the Government and donors to devote greater resources and increase operational capabilities to disrupt drug trafficking.

Police reform and the mentoring, training and advisory services that UNODC provides to law enforcement and judicial authorities have become all the more imperative in the context of the withdrawal of international forces.

UNODC continues to support the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan, and our work is accelerating. We have trained more officers in 2021 than in all of 2019, in some 20 activities reaching more than 600 officers over the past two and a half years.

Our training mainstreams human rights and gender issues, and we have helped the Ministry of Interior Affairs develop its code of conduct.

Our Office has also been working with the Government to set up the first anti-drug canine unit, with operations due to start in November.

Fourthly, counter-narcotics responses must go hand in hand with action to tackle corruption, secure public revenue and develop an entrepreneurial licit economy that can generate jobs and innovation.

Related action to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism is also needed to deprive criminal networks and terrorist actors of funds.

At the start of June, at the first-ever General Assembly special session against corruption, Member States adopted a political declaration, which invites UNODC, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations to strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

UNODC is ready to meet this request by reinforcing our long-standing support, including to the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre and the Office of the Attorney General.

Fifth, we need to strengthen regional cooperation to protect people, stop criminal and terrorist exploitation of legitimate trade and prevent spillover effects.

Drug trafficking and illicit cash flows, as well as crimes such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking, pose dangers within and beyond Afghanistan's borders.

Addressing regional and global dimensions is also essential to stop the flow of precursors into the country and to disrupt flows of opiates trafficked out of the region on the southern, northern and Balkan routes.

In response, UNODC brings together Afghanistan with its neighbours through integrated country, regional and global programmes that support mechanisms and platforms for law enforcement coordination and cooperation.

Furthermore, we have helped to equip and train an interregional network of customs authorities and port control units, including at Afghanistan's airports and borders, to identify and intercept illicit goods, while facilitating legitimate trade.

Our Office has also established an asset recovery network for West and Central Asia to clamp down on money-laundering and target illicit financial flows out of the region.

We are seeking to further connect Afghanistan and neighbouring countries with South Asia, the Gulf and Eastern Africa, by linking efforts with UNODC law enforcement and judicial cooperation initiatives in these regions.

We are also taking forward our work under the "One United Nations" framework for Afghanistan currently being finalized, with UNODC directly contributing to the people, prosperity, peace and partnership priorities.

Sixth and finally, we need to ensure all of our support advances the hard-won gains made by women and girls in Afghanistan, so they can play an active role in shaping the future of the country.

UNODC alternative development work has a special focus on developing women's skills and capacities, and we are helping women recovering from drug addiction to find jobs.

Our efforts to promote gender equality in law enforcement have resulted in an equal number of women police officers in airport interdiction units, and in three women serving on the new canine handler team.

I urge Afghanistan and its partners to ensure that balanced counter-narcotics responses that promote inclusion and empower women and girls are integrated across efforts to negotiate, build and sustain peace.

A peace process that enables alternative development, drug control and health responses to be implemented in all areas of the country, including those outside government control, could help to make decisive progress against the illicit drug economy, to secure the future of Afghanistan.

I would like to conclude by thanking and commending all my colleagues in the United Nations team in Afghanistan for their dedication to the essential mission of the United Nations.

UNODC stands in solidarity with the Government and people at this difficult and decisive moment, in full commitment to achieving the lasting and just peace that Afghanistan truly deserves.

Annex III

Briefing by the Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Mary Akrami

I welcome the report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team that was shared with this body in April of this year. Sadly, since the release of that report, violence has increased and has claimed the precious lives of several hundred, the majority of them being professional women and schoolchildren and youth. Thousands have been displaced from their homes.

What was said to be a peace process that started between the United States and the Taliban ended up being a deal between the United States and the Taliban. For Afghan people, that deal has brought nothing but increased violence, deteriorated security, political instability, a worsened economic situation, displacement and more uncertainty.

The parties to the peace negotiations should not negotiate peace and commit violent offensives at the same time. This duality only serves to undermine the peace process and lower the level of confidence people have in the peace process. A ceasefire should not be the goal of the peace talks but, instead, a ceasefire should pave the way for the peace process.

This is why Afghan civil society, particularly women, have called on all sides to agree on a ceasefire. Our plea has not only been dismissed by the Taliban but, instead, the Taliban have also launched a killing campaign against professional women, journalists and peacebuilders and have intensified their violent attacks on educational institutions and public and private properties.

Like me, millions of Afghans have lived and grown up in war. My generation and the young generation of today have not lived in peace. Imagine waking up every morning thinking you may not come back home to your family alive. We are tired of war. We are tired of attending funerals of our friends and relatives. We want an end to this war.

We welcome any effort by Afghan or international actors to pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict. However, we have been clear that we want a dignified and just peace, not a surrender to the Taliban or another violent extremist group.

Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace means freedom from all forms of violence and coercion, respect for human dignity, justice and human rights and equality for women and all citizens. It also includes economic and social development and the ability to live in harmony. While we want negotiations to succeed in bringing an end to violence, as women we are deeply concerned that women's rights do not become the price to be paid for peace.

Afghanistan is the conflict in which the centrality of women cannot be denied or overlooked. People from around the world will be watching to see if national, regional and international actors supporting the Afghan peace talks live up to their international commitments on the women and peace and security agenda; and to the protection of democracy, human rights and freedom of expression as an outcome of the peace process and in line with their commitments to international conventions they are signatories to.

Let me also tell you that, despite the enormous challenges, Afghan people are resilient. Our youth continue to organize and mobilize for peace, donate blood and volunteer to help those in need.

Our elders continue to encourage us to stand up for what is right. Our mothers remind us to not allow ourselves to be treated as second-class citizens, and our Afghan Women's Network continues to raise the voices of women throughout Afghanistan and the world.

Sustainable peace can only be achieved through an inclusive peace, and the only way to secure a sustainable peace is through an inclusive process in which Afghan society is asked to participate and engage. The Afghanistan Mechanism for Inclusive Peace is an example of many initiatives working for an inclusive peace process.

We encourage the United Nations to support Afghan civil society, women's groups and youth initiatives in their efforts to build peace from grass roots up and improve social peace.

We will continue our efforts for peace and justice, but you all know the war in Afghanistan is not a domestic one. It is a war among great powers, regional powers. Finally, it is a war fuelled by drugs and illegal mining.

My urgent message and that of civil society is that our call for a ceasefire is urgent!

The United Nations at the highest level, including the Security Council, must compel the Taliban and the Afghan Government to commit to a permanent ceasefire. Without a ceasefire, the Afghan people will continue to be killed and injured, our women widowed and our children orphaned.

We call on this body to not be a spectator. Do not allow a Rwanda-type genocide to take place under your watch in Afghanistan.

A politically stable, economically empowered and self-reliant Afghanistan where rule of law, justice and human rights are respected and citizens' rights are protected and guaranteed will benefit the region and the world. All this will only be possible when there is security and a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict.

Annex IV

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Eva-Maria Liimets

It is an honour to welcome you to this Security Council quarterly debate to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. We called for high-level attendance today in order to reaffirm the international community's continued commitment to the Afghanistan peace process and to Afghan people.

I would like to start with special thanks to Ms. Akrami for her enlightening personal description of the current situation in Afghanistan. The brave work that she and her fellow civil society organizations do is of great value for the future of the people of Afghanistan. Hearing today about the difficulties faced by women and youth and the dangers threatening human rights defenders was most troubling.

I would like to thank Special Representative Lyons for all her tireless work and today's briefing that truly put into perspective the reality on the ground. Despite the people yearning for peace and stability, they are instead faced with extreme levels of violence, targeted killings, a worsening humanitarian situation and an alarming rise in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections.

The violence on the ground constitutes the most serious threat to peace efforts. A 38 per cent increase in civilian casualties in the six months since the start of the peace negotiations is deeply tragic and works directly against hopes for reunification and reconciliation. We reiterate the call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire to save the Afghan people from more meaningless suffering. Only a negotiated political solution can lead to a sustainable peace in the country, as well as stability in the region.

We condemn in the strongest terms the recent terrorist attacks and targeted killings. Targeting students, health-care personnel, civil servants, journalists, humanitarian workers and human rights defenders is an attack against people who should rebuild Afghanistan; it is an attack against peace. The humanitarian situation is worsening, with nearly half of the population in need of humanitarian aid and COVID-19 infections undergoing an alarming rise; Afghans need and deserve international support. Estonia has donated vaccines to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility to help all countries badly hit by the pandemic. Interference with humanitarian access is unacceptable and prolongs the suffering of vulnerable people. We call on all parties to end the violence and protect their fellow countrymen.

Moreover, we draw attention to the commitments taken by the warring sides in February 2020 and call for constructive engagement in the peace negotiations. Estonia stands firm in its belief that no further concessions to the Taliban should be made. In line with Security Council resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#), an easing or lifting of sanctions will be considered when the conditions are met. Extensions of the travel ban exemptions to certain members of the Taliban have had a clear purpose – to advance the peace process. The Taliban must demonstrate a credible commitment to peace. We, in the Security Council, must help keep the Afghanistan peace negotiations vigorous, as it is the only way to reach an inclusive political settlement. An equally important task for us is to ensure that every woman and girl, every student and every member of civil society or a minority knows that they can have a peaceful future in their home country and that they can take on a role they choose for themselves.

Afghanistan has come a long way in the last two decades: democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights, especially women's rights, have become an essential part of the society. These achievements must not come under threat. Even as our forces leave the Afghan soil, our commitment to Afghanistan remains steadfast.

We wish to see that the outcome of the peace process preserves constitutional protections for women's and minorities' rights. We will continue our political and financial support, conditional upon the preservation of the country's human rights and democratic achievements.

Grave food insecurity makes it particularly worrying to witness the continued widespread prevalence of narcotics cultivation in Afghanistan. I would like to thank Ms. Waly and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their latest overview on this. Drug trafficking is a serious issue and it is crucial to stop criminal networks from perpetuating and profiting from the illicit economy.

In the next few months, we in the Security Council must all decide on the future role and presence of the United Nations in Afghanistan. Estonia and Norway will be engaging with you and our partner organizations in discussions on the best way to strengthen the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), keeping in mind the needs of the Afghan people. The good offices of UNAMA and Special Representative Lyons have been vital for international support reaching the people on the ground, and we intend to seek a solution to continue their commendable work in Afghanistan. We welcome the appointment of Jean Arnault and wish him success in his work. We also welcome the renewed diplomatic efforts by Afghanistan's neighbours and regional powers to accelerate the peace process.

I believe Mr. Atmar can agree with me that Afghanistan today is at a crossroads, and Afghans themselves need to define its future. We believe that Afghanistan, like all countries, deserves economic development and growth that provides new opportunities for its citizens, where their rights are upheld and where everyone, including women, as well as children and members of marginalized groups, feel protected.

Annex V

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence of Ireland, Simon Coveney

I would like to thank Special Representative Lyons and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Waly, and in particular Ms. Akrami for her remarks and her personal experience.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of my colleague, the Foreign Minister, Mohammad Haneef Atmar, and also thank him for his contribution.

Given the magnitude of the challenges facing Afghanistan, the Council must ensure that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has the backing necessary for its critical work.

Ireland looks forward to working with the Special Representative and with Council members on the UNAMA mandate renewal over the coming months.

I would like to make three points, if I may, on today's debate.

My first point is to express our concern at the lack of progress in the peace process.

Violence is causing or exacerbating the many challenges facing Afghanistan, making it the most dangerous country in the world for civilians today. Continued conflict and instability in Afghanistan also threaten regional peace and security.

Recent months have seen deliberate and sickening attacks against journalists, civil society actors, human rights defenders and humanitarian and medical workers, as well as minorities.

We have seen abhorrent violence directed towards schoolchildren, adding to the already high level of grave violence committed against Afghan children.

It is deeply disturbing that women and girls are being specifically targeted to sow fear about the exercise of their fundamental rights.

I utterly condemn these attacks and their intent, and our thoughts are of course with the victims and their families.

The people of Afghanistan have repeatedly made clear their strong desire for peace. Those engaged in violence – including the Taliban – must respect this desire. A ceasefire and a serious engagement in peace negotiations are the only way to end the cycle of violence.

Ireland and our European Union partners are also clear that any easing of sanctions and restrictions can only be considered when genuine progress is demonstrated on reducing violence and in advancing the peace negotiations, in accordance with resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#).

The Doha negotiations have the full support of the international community, and I thank Qatar for facilitating these negotiations.

The peace process must remain Afghan-owned and Afghan-led, but Ireland supports an enhanced role for the United Nations in facilitating and supporting the parties.

I urge Afghanistan's neighbours and regional partners to use their influence to promote a sustainable peace, and welcome the engagement of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy in building regional consensus for peace initiatives.

It is also crucial that Afghanistan never again be used as a base for international terrorism or as a centre for illicit drug production that finances and fuels terrorism and organized crime.

My second point is that all Afghans, and especially women, need to be meaningfully engaged in peace negotiations and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

For Ireland, ensuring women are at the table in all peace talks and processes is not empty rhetoric. It is a position that has been informed by lived experience on our own island.

Globally, the evidence speaks for itself. Women's participation in peace processes contributes to stronger outcomes and to better and more enduring peace agreements.

Afghan women are demanding to be heard. Yet they continue to be severely underrepresented in, and excluded from, peace negotiations. This is unacceptable and must be remedied. Participation is their right.

The peace process in its substance must also protect the rights of women. The international community cannot support any rollback of the rights of more than half of the Afghan population. Women's rights cannot be the price of peace.

Fair and inclusive representation also means ensuring the participation of Afghanistan's young people, civil society and minority groups.

When I spoke at the Afghanistan Conference last November, I set out our position on current and future support to the Afghan Government, which relies on adherence to the principles set out in the Afghanistan Partnership Framework.

Minorities in Afghanistan must be able to live in peace and security.

All Afghans must be afforded equal rights to reach their own potential.

My third point is on the need for a response to the rapidly deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Some 14 million Afghans are experiencing severe food insecurity. Half of all children under the age of 5 are suffering from malnutrition.

Ireland will support the Afghan Government in addressing the country's urgent humanitarian and security needs. Humanitarian actors are needed in Afghanistan now more than ever and must be protected and supported.

I condemn in the strongest terms the recent attacks on vaccination workers and against Halo Trust employees, whose demining work was helping local communities to live and farm safely.

While having made little contribution to climate change globally, Afghanistan is particularly at risk from the impacts of climate change.

Compounding this are the decades of conflict, which have prevented the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures from being taken, further increasing the country's vulnerability.

Ireland, as co-chair of the Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security, will work to ensure that the Council does more to understand the impact of climate-related security risks, which undoubtedly are contributing to an already difficult and unstable situation in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I call again on the Taliban to rejoin and constructively engage in the Doha process, which clearly has not been happening.

Doing so is essential to building peace. It is essential to determining Afghanistan's governance and its future. And it is essential to addressing the urgent humanitarian and development needs of the Afghan people.

We as a Council must stand with Afghanistan and its people.

We will continue to support their desire to build a fair and sustainable peace and a stable and prosperous future for all Afghans.

Annex VI

Statement by the Minister for External Affairs of India, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

We have noted the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan issued last week. The report is clear that the intra-Afghan talks have not resulted in a reduction of violence in Afghanistan. On the contrary, violence has only increased, especially after 1 May. The country has been witnessing targeted attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, girl students, Afghan security forces, Ulemas, women occupying positions of responsibility, journalists, civil rights activists and youth.

It is therefore crucial that the international community and, in particular, the Council press for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire to ensure an immediate reduction in violence and protection of civilian lives.

A durable peace in Afghanistan requires a genuine “double peace”. That is, peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan. It requires harmonizing the interests of all, both within and around that country.

India has been supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, including the intra-Afghan negotiations. If the peace process is to be successful, then it is necessary to ensure that the negotiating parties continue to engage in good faith, eschew the path to finding a military solution and fully commit towards reaching a political solution. A tangible demonstration of this commitment is required.

India welcomes any move towards a genuine political settlement and a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan. We support a leading role for the United Nations, since that would help improve the odds for a lasting and durable outcome.

I would like to reiterate our support for an inclusive, Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process. Any political settlement in Afghanistan must ensure that the gains of the last two decades are protected and not reversed. It should, therefore, preserve the constitutional democratic framework and ensure the protection of the rights of women, children and minorities.

For enduring peace in Afghanistan, terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries must be dismantled immediately and terrorist supply chains disrupted. There needs to be zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the cross-border one. It is equally important to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not used by terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country. Those providing material and financial support to terrorist entities must be held accountable. We, as an international community, must ensure that our commitments to Afghanistan, including to its various institutions, are maintained.

For Afghanistan’s economic development, it is important to have unhindered access to the high seas. The international community should work towards the removal of artificial transit barriers imposed on Afghanistan and ensure full transit rights guaranteed to Afghanistan under bilateral and multilateral transit agreements without any hindrance.

India remains committed to steadfastly supporting Afghanistan during its transition. Our development partnership, including more than 550 community development projects covering all 34 provinces, is aimed at making Afghanistan a self-sustaining nation. Additionally, we have recently signed a memorandum of

understanding with the Government of Afghanistan for building the Shahtoot dam, which would provide safe drinking water to the residents of Kabul city.

To provide greater regional connectivity, India has operationalized air freight corridors and the Chabahar port. India also extended humanitarian assistance of 75,000 metric tons of wheat to Afghanistan through the Chabahar port to overcome food insecurity in view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Furthermore, as a part of our endeavour to help Afghanistan tide over the COVID-19 pandemic, we have supplied made-in-India vaccines to Afghanistan, both bilaterally and through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility.

India continues to stand with Afghanistan in ensuring the restoration of normalcy through a legitimate democratic process that is essential for the long-term stability of Afghanistan and the region. India will continue to provide all support to the Government and people of Afghanistan in realizing their aspirations for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future, free of terror, so as to protect and promote the rights and interests of all sections of Afghan society.

Annex VII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield**

I thank Foreign Minister Liimets and Estonia for hosting this very important meeting. I also thank Special Representative Lyons for her very sobering and frank assessment of the situation in Afghanistan. I thank Ms. Akrami for her briefing and her commitment to women and girls. I also would like to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ms. Waly, for her discussion on the important work of UNODC, which is of critical importance to Afghanistan and its neighbours. And finally, I welcome Foreign Minister Atmar.

President Biden announced in April, after 20 long years, that the United States will be withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan. Let me stress that this was not a decision that was taken lightly. It was made after close consultation with our allies and our partners. And I stress also that our commitment to Afghanistan's safety and security endures. We will use our full diplomatic, economic and assistance toolkit to support the peaceful, stable future the Afghan people want and deserve. And we will continue to support the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in securing their country. To that end, today I would like to talk about three aspects of Afghanistan's security: providing humanitarian aid, stopping violence and drug trafficking and supporting the peace process.

First, as part of our commitment to Afghanistan's future, the United States is providing more than \$266 million in new humanitarian assistance. That brings total United States humanitarian aid for Afghanistan to nearly \$3.9 billion since 2002 – on top of the \$36 billion in civilian development assistance we have also provided since that time. Some 18 million people in Afghanistan are in desperate need – and more than 4.8 million are internally displaced. Add on increased food security and a surge of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases, and it is clear that Afghanistan needs humanitarian support. So, we strongly encourage other donors to support Afghanistan's immediate humanitarian needs.

Second, we have now seen months of unacceptable violence, often directed towards ethnic and religious minorities and innocent women and young girls. In other words, the country's most vulnerable people are being attacked. And I want to extend my deepest condolences to these victims and their families, and in particular the Hazara community that has been so acutely impacted by these attacks. All Afghans – all Afghans – deserve the opportunity to go about their days – doing their jobs, attending schools, shopping in markets – without fearing for their lives. In particular, we need to preserve the progress Afghan women and girls have made by protecting their rights and freedoms, moving forward. So, we are encouraged to see the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, Jean Arnault, travel to the region. We look forward to hearing his assessment when he returns.

Everyone who can influence the parties involved – including Afghanistan's neighbours – should step up now to secure the region and promote peace and stability. Like us, Afghanistan's neighbours want to ensure terrorists can never use Afghanistan to threaten the security of any country. An Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbours can link the economies of South and Central Asia and provide safety and security for all. So, it is also in everyone's interest to stop the flow of drugs into regional and international markets. The cultivation of opium poppy, and the drug trafficking it spawns, can be devastating to families and communities inside and outside Afghanistan. The United States is therefore proud to support Afghan farmers, including women, to create sustainable livelihoods as alternatives to poppy cultivation.

Third and finally, the parties to this conflict must press forward on a peaceful resolution in Afghanistan which protects the gains of the last two decades. We have all heard Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lyons's appeal. We must push for meaningful and inclusive negotiations – with the full participation of women – that will lead to a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and a just and durable political settlement. To the Taliban, we reiterate that the military path will not lead to legitimacy. As many of us have stated, including my colleagues on the Council from Europe, Russia and China, there is no military solution in Afghanistan. The world will not recognize the establishment in Afghanistan of any government imposed by force, nor the restoration of the Islamic Emirate. There is only one way forward: a negotiated and inclusive political settlement through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

To close, I would like to thank our partners and allies working to maintain international civilian and diplomatic operations in Afghanistan. These efforts reflect an important consensus that we must sustain support for peace efforts and continue providing needed civilian and humanitarian assistance. And in the meantime, we urge Afghans themselves to remain resolute in their efforts to achieve a peaceful future for their country. The international community is behind you.

Annex VIII**Statement by the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Audun Halvorsen**

Let me initially express my gratitude to Foreign Minister Liimets and the rest of our Estonian co-penholders on the Afghanistan file for their able work in preparing for this meeting. I also wish to take this opportunity to salute the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lyons and her dedicated staff for the relentless efforts they make to address the demanding issues confronting Afghanistan.

We also express our support to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Afghanistan's narcotics situation. This is important as the UNODC Afghanistan opium survey documented a 37 per cent increase in areas under opium poppy cultivation in 2020. And I would like to thank Mary Akrami of the Afghan Women's Network for the insightful presentation that she shared with us.

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. The international military withdrawal is proceeding at phase. The level of violence is high, aggravated by numerous targeted attacks against civilians, including aid workers, human rights defenders and minorities. This calls for an immediate and meaningful reduction in violence and progress in the peace process. We are hopeful that the negotiations in Doha will yield results. The Afghan parties must own the process and recognize their responsibility in leading the way to peace. Simultaneously, the international community must do more to demonstrate solidarity and support to the Afghan people in their efforts at ending four decades of conflict.

The humanitarian situation is grave. In addition to suffering from conflict and growing poverty, Afghans may once more face dreadful consequences of drought and food insecurity. The continuing high level of violence in Afghanistan and its impact on civilians are appalling. We strongly condemn the targeting of humanitarian aid workers, most recently against mine clearers in Laghman Province and vaccine providers in Nangarhar.

Threats and killings of media workers and human rights defenders also give ground for deep concern.

Targeted attacks create a climate of fear and undermine the work towards sustainable peace, democracy and protection of human rights, like freedom of expression.

Attacks must be investigated, and perpetrators held to account. The Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict shows that Afghanistan remains among the countries most affected by attacks on schools and hospitals.

A horrific example was the May assault on a school in a Hazara district in Kabul.

Furthermore, the conflict and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic fuel absenteeism and school closures. Children are deprived of access to education, which increases other protection risks, including the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Recent reports regarding the detention of children for alleged association with armed groups cause concern.

We urge the Afghan Government, United Nations agencies and donors to urgently establish appropriate reintegration programmes to facilitate their return to civilian society. The violence across the country underlines the need for rapid progress in the peace process. Norway remains committed to supporting this process in any way the parties desire. Again, we wish to underscore the importance of creating

an inclusive peace process, where various groups of society have a voice and proper representation.

The full participation of women in all phases and aspects of peace and security processes should be emphasized. Women have a right to participate and to have a say in their own future. We must also listen intently and centre the needs and concerns of civil society in Afghanistan, and in women's groups, for whom violence is not abstract but a daily reality, and ensure that women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and media workers can safely continue their work.

We urge the United Nations and UNAMA leadership to exercise their influence in ensuring that Afghan women are not on the sidelines in any peace process, but have particular dedicated seats at the negotiation table.

Afghanistan is entering uncertain and challenging times. This calls for renewed support from the international community. Norway and Afghanistan have a long record of partnership. This will continue even as the international military operation ends.

Our substantial humanitarian and development assistance will be maintained, as will our commitment to the Afghan peace process.

Our engagement is also visible in the Council and its role in supporting the ongoing peace efforts. We see the UNAMA mandate renewal in September as a milestone in this regard and look forward to engaging with you on the path towards renewal in the coming weeks.

Annex IX

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

I thank Foreign Minister Liimets and Special Representative Lyons, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Waly, and the Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Ms. Akrami, for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of Mohammad Haneef Atmar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, at today's meeting.

On 12 September, Afghans took a significant first step on the road to peace, with the start of peace negotiations in Doha.

However, progress has been slow, and Afghans continue to suffer from debilitating levels of violence, against a backdrop of humanitarian need exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Resolute Support Mission comes to an end, I want to make clear that the United Kingdom remains fully committed to Afghanistan.

We will continue our enduring partnership with the Government of Afghanistan through our diplomacy and our development work, and we will continue to back its efforts to counter terrorism with support for the security sector.

If Afghanistan is to become the peaceful, prosperous and stable country that the Afghan people want and deserve, it is vital that the entire international community intensifies support for the country.

Today I want to emphasize three points.

First, that the United Kingdom condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the unacceptable levels of violence that innocent Afghans continue to suffer.

We are particularly sickened by the ongoing spate of targeted assassinations. These attacks on State officials, civil society activists, journalists, humanitarian and health-care workers, as well as women in prominent positions, are heinous and they undermine efforts to build peace.

Let us be clear. The Taliban are responsible for most of the violence across Afghanistan, and it is vital that we continue to leave them in no doubt: if the Taliban want a part in Afghanistan's future and the international community, then they must end violence and respect the rights of all Afghans.

Second, the United Kingdom wants to work with you all to energize the Afghan peace negotiations.

Only a negotiated and inclusive settlement will bring sustainable peace.

So the Taliban must engage meaningfully in peace talks and work towards a political settlement that protects the progress made in the country, including protections for women and minority groups. There can be no return to the intolerant and barbaric Islamic Emirate of the 1990s.

The United Nations has an important role to play. The United Kingdom would welcome an enhanced United Nations role in the peace process, including facilitating talks if the parties agree.

We are pleased to see Jean Arnault take up his role as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy.

We are confident he can build on the strong foundations laid by Special Representative Lyons, and that together you can help create the space and opportunity for negotiations to progress.

Finally, we look forward to working with Council members on UNAMA's mandate renewal in September.

The United Kingdom will support the continuation of UNAMA's role leading and coordinating international civilian efforts in Afghanistan.

The mandate must also give UNAMA full scope to continue to support the Government and people of Afghanistan on the road to peace.

We are in no doubt about the challenges ahead, but we remain hopeful that Afghanistan can become a more stable, peaceful and prosperous nation that respects the rights of all Afghans, including women and minorities.

The United Kingdom stands ready to work with you all towards that goal.

Annex X

[Original: Chinese]

Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Liimets for presiding over the meeting, Special Representative Lyons and Executive Director Waly for their briefings, and Ms. Akrami for her statement. I also welcome the presence of His Excellency Haneef Atmar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, at today's meeting.

The current situation in Afghanistan has reached a critical crossroads and is entering a new stage filled with uncertainty. We can see that since the United States announced its military withdrawal in mid-April, the internal negotiations among the Afghan people have not advanced but retreated, the security situation has gone from bad to worse, and the economic and humanitarian situation has become increasingly grim. China is deeply concerned about this. We should seriously consider what has led to the current situation in Afghanistan, and how is Afghanistan to achieve long term stability in the next stage?

The fate of Afghanistan is in the hands of the Afghan people, and the future political arrangements for Afghanistan should be decided by the Afghan people independently. The international community should abide by the principle of "Afghan led, Afghan owned", scrupulously uphold fairness and justice, and contribute more positive energy to promoting the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. No external force can seek narrow self interest in Afghanistan, nor can it regard Afghanistan as an arena for geopolitical games.

All parties in Afghanistan should prioritize the interests of the country and the people, consolidate the progress of peaceful reconstruction over the past 20 years, and explore a governance model and development path in line with Afghanistan's national conditions. Although the progress of the Afghan peace talks is slow, it has been hard won and cannot be cast away. It is hoped that all parties to the Afghan peace talks will earnestly seek consensus and clarify the road map and timetable for reconciliation as soon as possible. China welcomes the recent resumption of contacts between the domestic negotiating team and the Taliban delegation in Doha, and hopes that the two sides can restart a new round of negotiations as soon as possible. China is ready to hold an inter Afghan dialogue at an appropriate time, and will facilitate and support that effort.

Peace talks require a peaceful and stable environment. At present, violent incidents are occurring frequently in Afghanistan, with security incidents from February to May increasing by nearly 30 per cent year on year. Since May, the Security Council has issued three presidential press statements on violent attacks in Afghanistan. China condemns all violent attacks against civilians and calls for a ceasefire as soon as possible. We welcome the short-term ceasefire between the Afghan Government and the Taliban during Eid al-Fitr, and hope that both sides will create more favourable conditions and gradually expand the duration and scope of the ceasefire.

For some time to come, the withdrawal of foreign forces will remain the biggest external factor affecting the situation in Afghanistan. Foreign troops cannot simply arrive and depart at will. China urges foreign forces to withdraw in a responsible and orderly manner, fully consult with the Afghan Government on post withdrawal arrangements, enhance transparency for countries in the region, and prevent the security situation from deteriorating or even getting out of control. Terrorism is still

a serious challenge for Afghanistan and other countries in the region. All parties should make greater efforts to crack down on Al-Qaida, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and other terrorist organizations to prevent the return of terrorist forces. China opposes any politicization of counter terrorism or the application of double standards to it.

Lasting peace cannot be separated from strong development support. The international community should continue to support the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan, help Afghanistan promote regional cooperation, strengthen its Internet connectivity, and enhance its capacity for independent development. We should assist Afghanistan in implementing the National Peace and Development Framework for 2021 to 2025 and resolving issues ranging from drugs and poverty to refugees. Developed countries should earnestly fulfil their commitments and continue to provide development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played an important role in supporting the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan, and its mandate will expire in September this year. Under the current situation, there is great uncertainty regarding the conditions under which UNAMA will operate in the future. The United Nations should continue to play a role in Afghanistan, but its effective duties remain inseparable from security. As for what form the United Nations presence in Afghanistan will take after September, we ask the Secretary-General to propose specific arrangements and a range of options for consideration by the Security Council as early as possible.

As a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China has been actively supporting the Afghan peace process and making efforts in this regard. In May, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi presided over the “China + Central Asia (C+C5)” Foreign Ministers’ meeting, which issued a joint statement specifically focused on Afghanistan. In June, State Councillor Wang Yi presided over the fourth trilateral dialogue among Foreign Ministers of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, putting forward important suggestions on promoting peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. China also actively promotes a greater role for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the issue of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Currently, a memorandum of understanding on joint Chinese and Afghan construction under the Belt and Road Initiative is being implemented in an orderly manner, and China has provided billions of yuan in grant aid to Afghanistan. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID 19), China has also provided many shipments of goods and materials, as well as emergency food aid, to combat the epidemic in Afghanistan. Some seven hundred thousand doses of COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Kabul in early June, along with ventilators, anaesthesia equipment and other medical supplies.

China will do its best to continue to be a supporter, intermediary and facilitator of the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan, with a view to helping Afghanistan achieve peace, stability, development and prosperity at an early date.

Annex XI

[Original: French]

Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière

We have heard from the speakers about the gravity of the situation in Afghanistan today, on both the security and humanitarian levels. At the same time, the peace process is continuing. It is incumbent on all of us to continue to support it. In order to do so, we must take action on four priorities:

1. Reject and condemn violence. We have already said this in this room. The level of violence is unacceptable: every day the civilian population pays a heavy price. On several occasions the Council has condemned the heinous attacks against the men and women who are building the Afghanistan of tomorrow. We call for a ceasefire in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2532 \(2020\)](#) and [2565 \(2021\)](#). We strongly condemn all violence against humanitarian personnel, like that which recently took place at Jalalabad. Respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the press, by all parties is non-negotiable. Those who are responsible for these terrible crimes must be held accountable. There can be no impunity for them.

2. Demand a sincere commitment from all the parties. Our expectation of the Taliban is that they will truly engage in the negotiations. The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#) is in the process of examining requests for extension of exemptions to the travel ban to allow their negotiating team to travel to where the peace talks are being held. These exemptions, as with any change to the list of sanctions imposed by resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#), are neither an automatic right nor a free gift. They are a concession made, not to the Taliban, but to peace. Any change to this list can only be made on the basis of an evaluation of the real investment in peace of those listed, and on a case-by-case basis. If the Taliban do not respect their commitments, they must bear the consequences.

3. No violation of our values and principles. We are supporting a peace process belonging to the Afghan people, who are responsible for it. The commitment by the international community, whether the United Nations, the countries of the region or those who welcome initiatives to promote peace, is essential. We commend the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as well as the appointment of Jean Arnault. All initiatives to promote peace are welcome, but they must be coordinated and based on the same principles: the full participation of women as well as the preservation of democratic gains made over the past 20 years. I would like to commend the statement by Mary Akrami, which outlined the essential contribution of women and civil society to the peace talks. The world has changed and so has Afghanistan; peace cannot be achieved by going backward.

4. Take action against drug trafficking, which is a real poison and a hindrance to peace. Peace cannot be sustainable without bringing an end to this scourge. As we have heard from Ghada Fathi Waly, the situation is worsening. The increase in trafficking has had and will have an impact on peace, the Afghan people and the region. This is a subject of major concern. We welcome the new role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and call on all Afghanistan's partners to combat this scourge.

Annex XII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Martin Kimani

I congratulate Eva-Maria Liimets for convening this meeting and I thank Deborah Lyons, Ghada Fathi Ismail Waly and Mary Akrami for their briefings.

I also welcome the participation of Mohammad Haneef Atmar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

This debate is taking place at a defining moment in Afghanistan. We can all recall the world-shaking events that led to the intervention in Afghanistan that is now ending as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) draws down.

Al-Qaida in Afghanistan is today a pale shadow of its former strength. Its ability to plan, train for and carry out major global operations as it did in the United States on 9/11 and had done in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 has been comprehensively undermined. For that, Kenya recognizes the valuable service that NATO has done for the international community.

However, as the withdrawal gets under way, Afghanistan is in a precarious security situation marked by frequent attacks on multiple targets by multiple groups, including the Taliban. The peace process is stalled, and there is a mounting spate of targeted attacks against civil society and religious and ethnic minorities.

There are credible concerns that the gains in women's equity and inclusion in multiple arenas of Afghan life will now be rolled back.

Kenya urges the Taliban and all other political and militant groups in Afghanistan to make it clear that they will recognize the rights of women to education, professional opportunity, freedom to choose their partners and safety from all forms of gender-based and sexual violence.

Doing so will be key to Afghanistan building the opportunity, prosperity and hope that allows it to build and sustain peace in this, and coming, generations.

Any review of the 1988 sanction measures targeted at the Taliban should be in line with resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#) and predicated on the Taliban ceasing its violent activities and targeted attacks. In addition, any proposal to delist some of its members should only be considered on merit and on a case-by-case basis.

Kenya supports conditions-based withdrawals of regional and international peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. Those conditions must be disciplined and focused on the clear aims that led to the intervention in the first place.

For Afghanistan, this was the presence of Al-Qaida as an international terrorist group with hostile designs against international peace and security that it had the ability to put into practice in multiple theatres.

For now, this is no longer the case, meaning that the challenge now is to ensure that the withdrawal does not lead to major enduring challenges to the peace and security of Afghanistan and its immediate region.

It must also be made clear to all political parties and groupings in Afghanistan that any resurgence of international terrorism in the country will meet with immediate consequences.

In this regard, we should all be gravely concerned that attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-K) increased to 88 compared with 16 during the same period last year.

The Council must take a unified and unyielding stand against these acts of terrorism that is consistent with its resolutions.

Kenya now calls for the international community to do its utmost to support Afghanistan during this period of transition. That will require assistance and partnership in strengthening the peace process, offering development assistance, training and facilitating effective security and suppressing regional and international criminal networks that operate in the country.

It will also call for major efforts aimed at the education and professional and economic empowerment of women.

The peace process must remain Afghan-led and be all-inclusive. There must be space at the negotiating table for all sectors of the population. Women should be represented equitably in the High Council for National Reconciliation and should be full, equal and meaningful participants at the negotiation table.

We call for the immediate cessation of hostilities. All the parties must heed the calls for a renewed commitment to constructively engage in political dialogue.

International engagement must be coordinated, sustained and linked to economic and financial aid that is designed to address fragility and is inclusive and fair in its implementation. It should also be aligned to the priorities of the Afghan Government.

We welcome and encourage the continued implementation by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) of the nine local peace initiatives involving engagement with youth and religious scholars on peace and mediation efforts in several provinces.

On the humanitarian aspects, we are gravely concerned that nearly half of the population is in need of assistance due. The dire situation is compounded by the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Kenya appeals to the international community to scale up emergency aid contribution and assistance. We also call for assistance for vaccine access and distribution.

The Government and all parties must also keep humanitarian corridors safe and open for assistance.

I conclude by commending Deborah Lyons, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMA, her team and all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan for their commitment to service despite the challenges.

I reaffirm Kenya's unqualified support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that responds to the needs and aspirations of the entire population of Afghanistan.

Annex XIII

[Original: Spanish]

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramon de la Fuente

We wish to thank Estonia for convening this debate. We welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mohammad Haneef Atmar, as well as the senior officials who have participated in this meeting, and thank Special Representative Lyons for her report. We also welcome the participation of Ms. Akrami in today's debate as a representative of civil society.

Over the past two decades, Afghanistan has continued to be a subject of concern to the Security Council. Mexico recognizes the resilience of the Afghan people and notes that there has been significant progress, which must be preserved.

In light of the complex situation prevailing, we would briefly like to raise the following points:

The parties must resume dialogue without delay. The peace negotiations were a watershed and a major achievement in the reconciliation process. The resumption of the negotiations depends to some extent on coordinated and effective action by the international community. My country expresses its support to the initiatives at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels that have promoted progress in the peace process. But it is not possible to understand the situation in Afghanistan without listening to women, nor will it be possible to make progress without their participation in all decision-making processes and giving them a seat at the table for any dialogue.

The future of Afghanistan must be democratic, inclusive and peaceful. It is therefore essential to preserve the progress of the past 20, in particular the economic and social rights of women, youth and minorities. We welcome the formation of the High Council of State by President Ghani, and call for its membership to reflect a plurality of Afghan voices.

The security situation in Afghanistan is very fragile. The increased activity by terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan is of concern. We condemn the deliberate attacks against the civilian population: women, girls, students, humanitarian workers, the health sector and the communications media.

The withdrawal of international troops should be orderly and coordinated. It is essential to avoid any negative impact on regional dynamics or on the ability of the Afghan armed forces to confront terrorism. The territory gained at enormous human and economic cost in the fight against this scourge must not be lost.

The conditions must be created for improvement in the humanitarian situation. Around half of the Afghan people require humanitarian aid. We recognize the commitment of humanitarian workers despite the interference and aggression they have suffered. Humanitarian operations must be able to act in an independent, impartial, efficient and timely manner, and the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in coordinating these efforts is essential.

In the coming months it will be crucial for the various key actors in the peace process to maintain flexibility with regard to the work of the United Nations in their country. We will be waiting for the reports on the activities of Mr. Arnault.

Annex XIV

[Original: French]

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Lyons for her very informative presentation. Niger recognizes the important work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on a daily basis to promote peace, good governance and development in Afghanistan.

I would also like to thank Ms. Waly and Ms. Akrami for their contributions to today's debate.

After decades of war, destruction and desolation, today the only aspiration of the Afghan people is for peace. This is a profound aspiration, which the Afghan people have demonstrated by welcoming with high hopes the beginning of the intra-Afghan peace talks in September 2020 at Doha.

It must be noted, however, that after many rounds of negotiations, the process is at a standstill, at a time when Afghanistan is experiencing a resurgence of violence, undermining hopes for a swift peace agreement. This cycle of violence must urgently be brought to an end in order to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its strong condemnation of the recent indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets, in particular schools, hospitals and ethnic and religious minority areas. The perpetrators of such acts must of course answer for their actions to the competent authorities.

To have validity, any peace process must take into consideration the constitutional rights of Afghan women and youth and the preservation of the gains of the past two decades in terms of respect for the rights of minorities in particular, as contained in the Afghan Constitution.

The post-conflict reconstruction period is just as important for Afghanistan. It is imperative for the negotiations to cover the question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as well as reform of the security sector.

Peace cannot return to Afghanistan unless we find an urgent and durable solution to the grave humanitarian crisis affecting the country. The effects of several decades of conflict, coupled with climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, have created a situation where over a third of the population, many of them children, face some level of food insecurity. Resources must urgently be mobilized to address this situation.

While the nations of Europe and America are entering the phase of reopening their borders and lifting restrictions and other measures imposed related to COVID-19, it must be noted that in most developing countries like Afghanistan, the pandemic continues to pose major challenges to a health system that has already been bled dry; vaccination coverage has barely reached 1 per cent of the target population.

In seeking a durable solution to the Afghanistan crisis, battling the pandemic as well as an appropriate response to the security risks related to climate change are challenges that must be met. Niger, which has been working closely with Ireland on the issue of climate in relation to conflict, is of the view that it would thus be appropriate for the Security Council to consider climate-related security risks in the renewal of the UNAMA mandate this coming September.

In conclusion, while we are discussing the situation in Afghanistan, we should keep in mind that it is first and foremost up to the Afghans to define their country's future, and the best way to help them is to listen to and support them. After many years of war, with its toll of death and destruction, the Afghan people should finally control their own destiny.

Annex XV

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, A. M. Evstigneeva

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Deborah Lyons, for her observations and assessments of the situation in Afghanistan. UNAMA plays an important role in coordinating international assistance to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. We listened attentively to the drug threat assessments presented by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ghada Waly. We thank the Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Mary Akrami, for her statement. We welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mohammad Haneef Atmar.

Today's meeting is taking place against the backdrop of the announced withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan on 14 April. The deteriorating situation is a cause for increased concern. The balance of power today looks unpromising. Violence in the country is rampant.

As was the case more than two decades ago, the continuing terrorist threat in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remains a serious challenge. Over the years, the situation in that regard has deteriorated owing to the emergence of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist organizations and related groups in the country. Militants with sleeper cells in the north and east of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are building the capacity to consolidate their influence in the country and for terrorist activity to spill over into the Central Asian region. ISIL-Khorasan's Afghan wing has not lost its ability to stage large-scale suicide and improvised explosive device attacks in various parts of the country, including Kabul. Fresh evidence of their atrocities is the heinous attacks on a girls' school in May and on a group of explosive ordnance disposal engineers in June. Attacks against religious and ethnic minorities by ISIL fighters remain a sad trend. In addition to civilians, including women and children, Afghan soldiers and police officers are dying every day at the hands of terrorists. We pay tribute to their heroism and courage. The desire to instil fear in, and a sense of continued violence among, ordinary Afghans is clearly behind the actions of these thugs.

The terrorist threat and the narcotics problem are inextricably linked. Unfortunately, despite the efforts being made, the situation with regard to drug production and trafficking remains of grave concern. Afghan narcotics remain a potent breeding ground for terrorism and a source of revenue for militants. The rather narrow coverage of the topic in the Secretary-General's report is disappointing. We find it unacceptable to gloss over or minimize the terrorist and drug-related challenges in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, especially in the current circumstances.

We remain committed to our obligations to promote a comprehensive response to the drug threat, including in cooperation with UNODC. Our practical steps are also in line with this approach, including through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We will continue to contribute to the training of narcotics police from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the countries of Central Asia, in cooperation with many States around the world, including Japan. We will continue to provide assistance and support to our Afghan friends, including within the framework of the Paris Pact.

Against that backdrop, we regret to note that the peace process has stalled. We see that attempts to organize an international meeting were not successful. We are convinced that the key to the success of the event lies in working diligently with all parties to ensure the participation of Government and Taliban representatives in the event.

Russia has consistently supported the Afghan-led peace process. We are sincerely interested in promoting the peace process and the resulting stabilization of the country's situation as quickly as possible. We believe firmly that everyone – Afghanistan, its neighbours in the region and the world at large – wins when there is peace, stability and national reconciliation.

We have done a great deal to initiate a national reconciliation process and direct inter-Afghan dialogue. This remains the focus of the troika plus Pakistan's efforts. Unlike other previously established formats, the extended troika has repeatedly proved its significance and relevance, as well as its ability to add momentum to the peace process, not through words but through deeds. That is evidenced by the meetings involving Government and Taliban delegations held in Moscow on 18 March, as well as the meeting held in Doha on 30 April. Both events resulted in joint statements reflecting common approaches to a peaceful settlement and a future political settlement with regard to Afghanistan, the sanctions regime imposed by resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#) and other substantive issues.

We note the growing global understanding of the importance of the regional context for an Afghan settlement. Maintaining regional consensus remains a tremendous help in facilitating a solution. We note the need to harness the potential of established structures, first and foremost the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We particularly wish to single out the revived mechanism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization-Afghanistan Contact Group. We see good potential for strengthening cooperation between Afghanistan and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

We are convinced that the consolidation of all international and regional efforts is more important now than ever.

In conclusion, as a long-standing friend and partner of Afghanistan, we support restoring the lasting peace that this long-suffering land has desired for so long. We are convinced that this task requires strategic patience and a readiness to compromise in order to achieve national reconciliation among all patriotically-minded political forces and their subsequent unity around a platform of Afghan reconstruction. Without this, the conflict will only worsen. Our common task is to maintain a united and indivisible Afghan State where tolerance prevails and the many ethnic groups coexist in peace and harmony.

Annex XVI**Statement by the Political Coordinator of the Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Isis Gonsalves**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends Estonia for convening this important meeting. We thank the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan and the briefers for their remarks.

As Afghanistan faces increasing violence and uncertainty, the country requires the continued support of the international community now more than ever. In the light of the stalling of intra-Afghan negotiations, international partners need to intensify efforts to broker a ceasefire and restart the peace talks. International and regional actors should exert all diplomatic and political means to influence the situation in Afghanistan in support of a lasting peace settlement and sustainable economic development in the interest of all Afghans. Any peace agreement should protect the rights of all Afghans, including women, youth and minorities. Moreover, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to an Afghan owned and Afghan-led process, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. We commend regional players' positive and constructive role in the Afghan peace and reconciliation process, despite the many challenges.

We remain deeply concerned about the wave of violence against women, media workers, civil society activists, government employees, children and health workers, among others. We strongly condemn this violence, including the recent attack against polio vaccinators in Nangahar Province and the bombing of schoolgirls in Kabul. Furthermore, we urge the parties to protect civilians from the type of unspeakable suffering that has been inflicted as a result of over 40 years of conflict. We must also work together earnestly to eliminate terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan and the wider region.

Also, the drug control problem in Afghanistan and the neighbouring region requires consolidated effort and the commitment of all stakeholders. The relevant parties should redouble efforts in striving to resolve this drug problem and its resulting ills. In this connection, we must remain focused on combating illicit production and trafficking in opiates.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to expose Afghanistan's vulnerabilities. We are now deeply concerned that the pandemic is spiralling out of control in Afghanistan. We must respond urgently, as an international community, to limit the spread of the virus by providing resources to countries in need. More specifically, we must ensure equitable access to vaccines.

In addition, climate change continues to increase insecurity in Afghanistan. Existing threats to food security and livelihoods will be exacerbated by the high likelihood of drought triggered by La Niña weather. The impact of climate change on food insecurity will lead to new humanitarian crises. We commend the efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations through the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities – Agricultural Inputs Response Capacity window, in response to Afghanistan's food and agricultural threats and emergencies.

The urgent humanitarian need calls for sustained and coordinated donor support to the underfunded 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan. We call on donors to support the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. Such assistance is vital to scale up life-saving activities across the country.

After the withdrawal of all foreign troops, Afghanistan would be in need of a strong and unified resistance. Our policies on Afghanistan should be geared towards stabilizing and protecting its political stability. Without continued international support, Afghan security forces will collapse, and the country's economic and security morass will deepen and worsen. The role of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and international partners will continue to be extremely important following the drawdown of the international military forces.

In closing, we would like to echo President Ghani's call on every member of the General Assembly and the permanent members of the Security Council to help Afghanistan achieve the end state of a sovereign, united and democratic Afghanistan, at peace with itself and the region, capable of preserving and expanding the gains achieved.

Annex XVII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Tarek Ladeb**

At the outset, I would like to thank Deborah Lyons, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ghada Fathi Waly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mary Akrami, the Director of Afghan Women's Network for their briefings. I would also like to acknowledge the participation of Mohammad Haneef Atmar, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, and thank him for his intervention.

Tunisia reiterates its solidarity with the Afghan people and its support for the peace process in Afghanistan. We hope that tangible progress will soon be made in the negotiations between the Government and the Taliban and would like to renew in this regard our appreciation to all the international partners and neighbours of Afghanistan for their efforts to facilitate this process.

We remain, however, deeply concerned by the continued high level of violence in Afghanistan, for which the Taliban is largely responsible, as most recently illustrated by its deadly military offensive in northern Faryab Province last week. We are also concerned by reports that the surge in the conflict is enabling the activities of local and international terrorist organizations and facilitating the production and trafficking of illegal drugs.

We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and stress again the responsibility for all parties to take the necessary measures to prevent civilian casualties and to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law obligations. We underline in this connection the importance that all allegations of violations be investigated and that perpetrators be held accountable.

We are indeed particularly troubled by the deliberate targeting of civil society leaders, such as media representatives, judges and human rights defenders, especially among women, as well as by the increase in attacks against health and humanitarian workers and ethnic and religious minorities.

We believe it is crucial that all parties react quickly to address this environment of fear and terror created by such attacks, in order to bring back hope in the peace process.

We reiterate in particular our call to the Taliban to put an end to the attacks perpetrated by its members, honour its counter-terrorism commitments and negotiate in good faith with the Government.

In the current critical juncture, with the announced withdrawal of the international forces, we believe that strong solidarity with and support for Afghanistan is today, more than ever, needed in order to accompany the peace process and to sustain the political settlement that, hopefully, will eventually be reached; and we welcome the renewed commitments of Afghanistan international partners in this regard.

We would also like to underline again the importance that any future peace agreement clearly include guaranties for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms for all in Afghanistan, with particular attention to women's rights and participation.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the important accomplishments of UNAMA; we believe it will have an even bigger role to play in the coming period for the promotion of peace, development and fundamental rights in Afghanistan.

Annex XVIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy

Viet Nam thanks the Estonian Presidency for convening this important meeting and Eva-Maria Liimets, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, for presiding over it.

I also thank Deborah Lyons, Ghada Waly and Mary Akrami for their comprehensive briefings.

Viet Nam is closely following the situation in Afghanistan. It is clear that the country continues to face tremendous challenges in the pursuit of peace.

As the intra-Afghan peace negotiations have shown limited progress, Viet Nam is deeply concerned about the alarming increase of violence and civilian casualties. We strongly condemn the targeted attacks on civilians, including women, children, students, humanitarian workers and civil servants during the past months. It is tragic to hear about the deaths of mine clearance workers in Afghanistan on 8 June. We would like to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Afghanistan.

In light of the current situation, I wish to raise the following three points:

First, on the political aspect, it is imperative to preserve the gains achieved so far. Urgent efforts are needed to advance the intra-Afghan peace negotiations. We call on the relevant parties to set aside their differences, build trust and reach a timely peaceful agreement to end the conflict.

To this end, the support from the United Nations, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), regional countries and other international partners remains critical to promoting practical progress of the peace talks. We look forward to further collaboration between UNAMA and Jean Arnault, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan, in supporting the peace process in the country.

We highly welcome the establishment of the High Council for Women and High Council for Youth and encourage further efforts to enable the full and meaningful participation of Afghan women and youth in all aspects of society.

Second, on the security and humanitarian aspect, it is crucial that a permanent ceasefire be achieved as soon as possible, thereby putting an end to the ongoing violence.

The high number of civilian casualties in the past months is unacceptable. In this regard, we once again urge all relevant parties to fully respect international humanitarian law, immediately stop targeting civilians and civilian objects, particularly those that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as ensuring unhindered humanitarian access.

We are concerned about the increasing humanitarian challenges in the country, of which the number of people facing high level of food insecurity had reached 16.9 million by March 2021. We call on the United Nations and regional and international partners to continue to strengthen its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in this regard to ensure its projected needs.

We also commend the efforts of UNAMA, the Mine Action Service and partners in facilitating mine clearance and risk education activities in this difficult time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Third, the international community should continue to support the Government of Afghanistan in promoting socioeconomic development and reconstruction of the country.

We commend the efforts of regional countries and international partners in promoting projects to improve economic development, livelihood assistance and the health-care system in Afghanistan. We wish to see further support for the country in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including the vaccination process.

Strengthened efforts are also needed to combat the threat of terrorism, crime and drug trafficking and to assist people with licit sustainable livelihoods.

In closing, Viet Nam would like to reiterate our support for the pursuit of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan has gone on for far too long. It is our sincere hope that peace will soon be achieved in this country for its people at long last.

Annex XIX

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mohammad Haneef Atmar

I would like to thank the President for hosting and presiding over this open debate on the situation in Afghanistan and for Estonia's effective and able stewardship of the Security Council during the month of June.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Deborah Lyons, for her thorough briefing.

I also add my gratitude to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for their tireless work at a critical time in Afghanistan.

Finally, I thank Ghada Fathi Ismail Waly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mary Akrami for their expert interventions.

We meet at an inflection point in Afghanistan's history. It is a time that has created hope, but also fear and concern for the future – hope for achieving a sustainable peace after four decades of imposed war and fear of falling back into a continued protracted conflict.

We are at a time that underscores the linkage between Afghanistan's peace and security and regional and international security and stability.

A regression into a protracted conflict pursued by the Taliban in collaboration with a number of United Nations-designated transnational terrorist networks that maintain a symbiotic relationship with transnational narcotics and organized crime will pose a serious threat, not only to Afghanistan, but also to our neighbours, the region and the international community as a whole.

This is certainly not an outcome to be accepted after two decades of enormous sacrifices in blood and treasure by Afghans and our regional and international partners.

Profoundly appreciating your sacrifices and support over the past two decades, we, the Government and people of Afghanistan, are committed to continuing to partner with our international and regional partners, to not let our joint sacrifices go in vain and to work to achieve our shared goal of peace, security and prosperity.

The utmost desire and aspiration of all Afghans weary of war and ongoing bloodshed is the achievement of a lasting peace and a permanent end to the conflict.

We know that this desire is equally shared by all of you, our international and regional partners, Members of the United Nations and members of its Security Council.

All of us have welcomed the Doha peace agreement signed by the United States and the Taliban in February 2020.

The Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#) to welcome it and express its support for its implementation.

We are grateful to the Security Council for doing so and to all of our international and regional partners for supporting the Afghanistan peace process.

In good faith, the United States and our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners have met almost all of their obligations in the agreement, including the withdrawal of their troops, to be completed in the coming weeks.

We, the Government of Afghanistan, were not a party to the Doha peace agreement but, to respond positively to the shared desire of our people and the international community, we released over 6,000 Taliban prisoners, constituted all necessary institutions to support the peace process, including an inclusive peace negotiation team, and engaged in good faith with the Taliban and our international partners for peace.

However, it is a sad reality that the Taliban have not honoured any of their obligations under the Doha peace agreement.

First, they have not cut their ties with international terrorism. They are hosting and aiding, not only Al Qaeda, but also regional terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, in pursuit of their violent campaign against both Afghanistan and other countries.

This is well documented by the recent reports of the Sanctions Monitoring Team, as well as many other State and international agencies.

Second, the Taliban agreed to reduce violence and work with the Government of Afghanistan to achieve a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.

Under the watchful eyes of the international community, our people have witnessed only the worst violence of the past two decades since the signing of the Doha peace agreement, and especially since the announcement by the United States and NATO of their troops' withdrawal.

The massacre of schoolboys in Logar, schoolgirls in west Kabul, deminers in the north and vaccinators in the east over the past weeks are just some examples of the senseless violence inflicted by Taliban and their associates.

The Taliban said they were fighting the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, but they need to explain to the world community as to why they are killing their fellow Afghans, and especially civilians, while the foreign troops are leaving the country.

Third, it was also the Taliban's obligation, based on the agreement, to enter into negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and reach a political settlement.

The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has proposed, in good faith, a peace plan for a ceasefire, power sharing, early elections and the determination of the future of Afghanistan by the free will of the Afghan people.

For almost 10 months now, we have had no serious engagement from the Taliban for serious peace negotiations, no response to our proposed peace plan and absolutely no counterproposal.

The five host countries, Qatar, Norway, Germany, Indonesia and Uzbekistan, as well as the United Nations and Turkey, have witnessed this lack of commitment and progress and the rejection of the proposed peace conference in Istanbul.

While the Taliban have shown no positive response to any peace plan as yet, the Government and people of Afghanistan are deeply grateful to all our regional and international partners for their continued commitment and support.

In a couple of weeks, the foreign troops withdrawal will be completed and the international community will, unfortunately, see for itself that the Taliban will not have met any of their obligations in the Doha peace agreement.

This situation calls for a serious review and assessment as to where we, as the international community, are with the peace process.

There must be respect for the Doha peace agreement and Security Council resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#) and there must be accountability and an appropriate response.

To achieve our shared goal of peace, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan proposes the following two measures:

First, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remains fully committed to the peace process and will continue to engage the Taliban negotiating team in Doha.

We fully support the role of the United Nations, including that of UNAMA, and the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy in the peace process and regional cooperation.

We therefore call on the international community and our regional partners to use their influence to persuade the Taliban to honour their obligations under the Doha peace agreement.

The establishment of a nationwide ceasefire, to allow the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to meet the immediate humanitarian priorities as a result of the pandemic, the conflict and the unfolding drought, should be a top priority for international diplomacy to achieve through the third round of the peace talks in Doha, expected to begin soon.

Second, a monitoring mechanism should be established by the international community to verify the implementation of the Doha peace agreement and Security Council resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#).

The Security Council will be expected to review the implementation of the obligations under the Doha peace agreement and Council resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#) and to take appropriate measures to ensure compliance.

To conclude, it is no doubt that the senseless violence and the refusal of the Taliban to honour their obligations have made the situation in Afghanistan and our region precarious and dangerously unstable.

It is our strong belief, however, that if we work together as the international community of the United Nations and commit all of our support for the implementation of the Doha peace agreement and resolution [2513 \(2020\)](#), we can arrest this threatening situation and achieve lasting peace, security and prosperity for all of us.

Annex XX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Mitch Fifield**

Australia appreciates the opportunity to comment on the situation in Afghanistan and applauds the efforts by the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Deborah Lyons, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, Jean Arnault, and the whole United Nations family for trying to bring the parties to the conflict in Afghanistan together.

A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan can only be achieved through adherence to international norms and standards, especially in human rights, which includes the rights of women, children and minorities. There is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Australia remains committed to supporting an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process, which charts a course towards a safe, secure and prosperous future, eventually allowing millions of displaced Afghans to return home.

When women are fully included in decision-making, societies are more likely to prevent and resolve conflict. Women should have the opportunity to decide on policies and programs that determine their safety and security, including through peace processes. We urge the parties to recognize the benefits of a more inclusive society, where the gains made over the past 20 years are maintained and built upon, in line with international norms and standards.

We encourage all parties to return to the negotiating table and continue progress towards a political settlement. We urge the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to remain united in defending the constitution. We urge the Taliban to recognize that the only path to legitimacy is through constructive engagement in the political process. This is essential for continued international support for Afghanistan.

We condemn, in the strongest terms, the high levels of violence in Afghanistan, particularly the ongoing targeting of human rights activists, women, children, humanitarian workers and minorities. In the first quarter of 2021, UNAMA documented 1,783 civilian casualties (573 killed, including 151 children). Targeted assassinations rose by 40.1 per cent, to 297, with victims including civil servants, two university lecturers in Kabul, three female polio vaccinators in Jalalabad and the head of the Takhar Ulema Council. The attack on the Sayed ul-Shuhada girls' school on 8 May, which killed over 80 students, was a tragic example of such violence. We call for an immediate ceasefire, an end to targeted killings and for the Taliban and the Islamic Republic to work together in responding to the third wave of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the growing humanitarian crises.

Australia has provided \$1.5 billion (to May 2021) in development assistance to Afghanistan since 2001. Afghanistan will receive \$50.0 million from the 2021/22 development budget allocations, aligned with our long-term commitment of \$200 million over 2021–2024 in development assistance, which was announced at the 2020 Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan. Afghanistan continues to be the seventh-largest recipient of Australian bilateral aid.

The future of the country lies in the hands of the Afghan people. Australia urges the parties to allow the Afghan people's voices to be heard through democratic processes. We call on the parties to seize this opportunity, to end the bloodshed and to bring a just, durable and resilient peace to Afghanistan.

Annex XXI**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations**

At this critical juncture for Afghanistan, it is vital that the international community send a strong message of continued support and of its unequivocal expectations regarding the future and the peaceful development of the country. The United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) specifically will have to play their important role.

Germany will continue to stand by the Afghan people, as a reliable partner. While our military engagement comes to an end, our civilian assistance continues. We remain determined to support the Afghan Government in addressing the country's security, stabilization, development and humanitarian needs, and to help the people of Afghanistan, particularly women, children and marginalized groups, as they seek to preserve hard-won rights and freedoms. The safety of our own presence and of our partners in Afghanistan is key for staying engaged and for our continued support of Afghanistan on its way to peace and stability.

The high level of violence, with continued fighting and attacks with civilian victims, and with assassinations, especially of women but also humanitarian workers, is completely unacceptable. We concur with the press statements of the Security Council over recent weeks and speak out against these heinous acts. We strongly call on all Afghan parties to reduce violence and to end targeted attacks. We reaffirm the importance of ensuring that the territory of Afghanistan is not being used by terrorist organizations aiming at threatening or attacking any other country.

The Afghanistan peace negotiations in Doha have still not led to substantial progress, despite the strong and legitimate expectations of the Afghan people and the international community. To reinvigorate the process, negotiating sides must reinforce their commitment to engage in meaningful negotiations and seize new opportunities to give momentum to their talks. In addition, confidence-building measures, such as an immediate reduction of violence, are urgently needed to give the negotiations a new impetus. We also call upon the international community, including the Security Council and countries from the region, to unequivocally and strongly support the peace process and to offer assistance to the intra-Afghan negotiations. Consensus among key regional and international stakeholders is crucial. Germany remains prepared to assist on this path.

We welcome the United Nations' commitment to playing a greater role in this process. We continue our engagement with and support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Deborah Lyons, and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, Jean Arnault. Looking ahead to September, the evolution of the political and security environment in Afghanistan might require an adaptation of the UNAMA mandate, with UNAMA being expected to continue leading and coordinating the international civilian efforts in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. Among others, the safeguarding of human rights, in particular women's and children's rights, in Afghanistan should remain a core element. We are ready to share our views and experiences as a former co-penholder with all stakeholders, including the United Nations Secretariat and Security Council members.

Annex XXII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations

We thank all briefers for their insightful briefings.

With the withdrawal of foreign troops, Afghanistan enters a daunting chapter in its journey towards peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is entering this chapter while also struggling with numerous challenges.

On this note, let me focus on three points:

First, advancing intra-Afghan negotiation.

Indonesia remains confident that intra-Afghan negotiation is the key towards a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The active and constructive engagement from all international and regional stakeholders remains critical for the success of the peace process, especially in nurturing mutual trust and understanding between all parties.

To ensure that all Afghanistan stakeholders will meaningfully engage in the peace process, the international community must be united to underscore that violence and military option are not acceptable.

To this end, Indonesia welcomes the plan to hold the Istanbul Conference.

We call for the United Nations, as a neutral host, along with the co-conveners to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant parties in this Conference.

Second, ensuring safety, security and well-being of Afghans.

A general improvement in safety and security of the civilian population that is preceded by a decreasing number of victims is one of the main indicators of a successful peace process.

Unfortunately, we have yet to see this development in Afghanistan. Indonesia remains concerned over the increasing security challenges towards the full withdrawal of foreign troops, especially rising terrorist attacks aimed towards the civilian population.

This is happening as humanitarian needs faced by the Afghan population are escalating at unprecedented levels, especially for food security and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response.

Indonesia calls for an increased role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and for all parties to ensure that there would be no setback in sustaining peace following the withdrawal. All progress, including women's rights, should be well preserved.

Third, investing in Afghan society.

Indonesia firmly believes that all elements of Afghan society have a stake in strengthening the peace process. The international community should work hand-in-hand to enhance the capacity of all these elements.

Indonesia has taken this initiative through the Afghanistan-Indonesia Women's Solidarity Network, as well as the Ulema Conference.

The Solidarity Network is the fulfilment of Indonesia's commitment to supporting women's full and meaningful participation in the peace process. This year,

Indonesia plans to host the second meeting of the Solidarity Network and several capacity-building programs.

Meanwhile, through the Ulema Conference, we shared with our Afghan counterparts our experience in building a peaceful and diverse society in a country with the biggest Muslim population on Earth.

To conclude, Indonesia remains committed to supporting the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, through capacity-building programs and dialogue facilitation.

We are ready to work together with UNAMA, as well as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, in this endeavour.

Annex XXIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi

With the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan on the horizon, this country is at a crossroads. It can go in the direction of reconciliation when all sides agree to engage in dialogue and bring an end to decades of bloodshed, or it can embrace more violence when one side uses its military might to force the other side to accept the terms of peace. The international community must not allow the latter to happen, as it will not be a genuine peace and, as a result, will not sustain.

Indeed, a safer, more stable and prosperous Afghanistan, in peace with itself and its neighbours, is in the interest of all Afghans, the region and the world. Conversely, an insecure and unstable Afghanistan, which is a source of violent extremism, terrorism and organized crime, including production of and trafficking in drugs, poses a threat to Afghans themselves, as well as to regional and international peace and security.

Therefore, confronting such threats and building a more secure and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of all, and indeed, the current phase is a common opportunity for everyone to work seriously to achieve these common goals.

This inevitably must start with an all-inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, Afghan-controlled and United Nations-facilitated peace process, guided by this fundamental principle that the path to a lasting peace, first and foremost, passes through a genuine internal dialogue with the broad participation of all Afghans from all political, ethnic and religious groups, including the Taliban, based on cooperation, understanding, compromise and reconciliation.

In other words, in such a diverse society as Afghanistan, no group or groups, however powerful militarily, can resort to force and violence to dominate others, and the establishment of a legitimate government is possible only through a comprehensive political process and democratic means.

With the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban's unwarranted justification to resort to force will be completely removed. Therefore, it must stop the violence; demonstrate its willingness to use the force of logic instead of logic of force to interact with its compatriots; and seize this unprecedented opportunity to contribute sincerely to establishing a durable peace in the country through political means, as peace and violence are mutually exclusive and cannot go hand-in-hand.

While we have witnessed many lost opportunities for peace in the past years, it is obvious that a possible new wave of violence and fratricide in Afghanistan will only lead to a new cycle of insecurity and instability, something that this country, the region and the world cannot afford.

At this critical juncture, the voice and demand of Afghans from all walks of life for a durable peace must be heard and effectively supported. They must not be left alone.

Preserving the past achievements of the people and Government of Afghanistan, including the Constitution, the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and women, the right to self-determination of people through elections, governance system and structures derived from the Constitution, as well as the commitment to combat terrorism, must be one of the main elements of any peace process.

To succeed, any peace process and subsequent steps must enjoy the strong support of all Afghans. It has now become clear that any peace process in Afghanistan that is guided and directed by only one actor, however powerful, and in the absence of active involvement of major players including from the region, and more importantly, with the least engagement of the United Nations, would not yield results.

The significant position and high capacity of the United Nations in organizing and facilitating the peace process in Afghanistan and also supporting and ensuring the full and effective implementation of any future peace agreement is irreplaceable and enjoys our full support. Iran continues to call for the central role, and further and substantive engagement, of the United Nations in an intra-Afghan peace process.

Afghanistan's security situation has remained a source of serious concern. The growing number of deadly terrorist acts by Da'esh in Afghanistan, targeting certain religious and ethnic minorities as well as women and girls, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, show the severity of its threat to Afghanistan and the region.

Such attacks indicate the vulnerability of ethnic and religious minorities and women in Afghanistan and the dire need for effective preservation of their rights. Such terrorist attacks also underline the need for continued efforts in combating terrorism in that country.

Prior and simultaneous to the withdrawal of foreign forces, Afghanistan's military and security forces must be supported and strengthened and effective assistance must be extended to Afghanistan in combating the illicit production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs; a source of financing terrorism and other crimes.

While pursuing a durable peace must remain a top priority, the international community must not lose sight of the dire need for economic development of Afghanistan, which is also an important pillar of sustaining peace.

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again calls on all parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, to place the interests of all people of Afghanistan above the other interests.

By hosting millions of Afghan refugees and establishing the link of this land-locked country to high seas through Iran's Chabahar Port and to Europe through the Khaf-Herat railway, Iran has stood with the people and Government of Afghanistan in their quest for a safer and more stable, democratic and prosperous country. We stand ready to further contribute to Afghanistan's prosperity, peace and stability.

Annex XXIV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations**

Afghanistan is now at a crucial juncture. The start of the withdrawal of troops under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Resolute Support Mission marks the beginning of a new era, during which the country must not be left alone. The international community will have to continue to be present in Afghanistan through new forms of commitments, prioritizing at this time the dimensions of humanitarian and financial assistance.

In this new course, it is all the more urgent that a true breakthrough occur in the intra-Afghan peace dialogue. The continuation of warfare is incompatible with the need and demands for peace of the Afghan people, who are paying the highest price for the unacceptable violence to which they are subject. A cessation of hostilities cannot be delayed. The resumption in Doha, on 8 June, of contact between the Afghan parties in the presence of mediators is certainly a positive step forward. It is essential, however, to keep the focus of those talks on issues of substance and base the future potential agreement on the principles of national reconciliation. If and when conditions allow, the organization of a high-level peace conference, under the aegis of the United Nations, should be envisaged.

Concrete, immediate action is needed from both sides and would also serve to show the goodwill to find a solution and instil confidence in the Afghan people, who are living more and more in fear and uncertainty about their future. The Taliban must cease their military pressure and end violence. Representatives of the republican institutions must put the interest of their citizens first, departing from their consolidated behavioural patterns, which are incompatible with the common good. It is paramount that they find unity and agreement in pursuing credible conditions for peace, reconciliation and reconstruction, in order to allow all Afghans to build their futures, in the full enjoyment of security and of human, political and social rights.

This future will not be sustainable without recognizing the central role of women in the country and in the peace process. Over the past two decades, Afghan women have shown their resilience and their will to win back their place in society, contributing to its change. This contribution must be encouraged and supported. The action of the international community must focus on empowering citizens and institutions, promoting well-structured and durable partnerships built on the political and social gains of the past 20 years, consolidating and further advancing individual rights, particularly those of women, youths and minors.

In the new era that is about to begin for Afghanistan, special attention will have to be paid also to the safety of foreign diplomats and expatriates. This is a prerequisite for ensuring the continuation of the political dialogue between Afghanistan and the international community, as well as for monitoring and allowing initiatives that will still be vital to the country.

Italy expresses, once again, its appreciation for the continued role of the United Nations at this new and complex juncture, with a special appreciation for the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnault. The United Nations confirms itself as the essential, irreplaceable pillar of international peace and security. This is all the more true within the Afghan context, where the United Nations can facilitate constructive involvement of the regional stakeholders, thus making the difference in the search of a negotiated solution to this conflict.

Italy reaffirms its commitment to continue to do its part and to make its contribution to peace in Afghanistan, alongside the Afghan people, the United Nations and our international partners.

Annex XXV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

Japan highly appreciates the convening of this high-level debate on Afghanistan at a time when the country is in need of the solidarity of the international community more than ever. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Deborah Lyons, for her briefing and her dedicated efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Japan strongly believes that a sustainable peace in Afghanistan can only be achieved by a political settlement that reflects the voices of all segments of society, including women, youth and minority groups. Japan continues to support the Government of Afghanistan and other key stakeholders in their efforts to advance an inclusive peace process.

It is our understanding that the decision to withdraw all international forces was made to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Nevertheless, it is also understandable that the people of Afghanistan harbour anxiety over uncertainty during and after the departure of international forces. At this critical transition period, therefore, it is essential that the international community send a clear message to the people of Afghanistan that it remains committed to supporting them in the years to come as we have done over the past two decades.

It is also critical for the international community to stand firm against unabated violence and terrorism, particularly those targeting and involving civilians. Japan condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent terrorist attacks targeting innocent civilians including schoolgirls, aid workers and journalists. We continue to urge all concerned parties to stop the violence immediately and enact a comprehensive ceasefire.

Japan reiterates that a sustainable political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan requires the strong commitment and cooperation of neighbouring and regional countries, which must be well-coordinated and harmonized with broader international efforts to support Afghan stakeholders. To this end, we encourage Ms. Lyons and Mr. Arnault, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, to strengthen their efforts to effectively coordinate international and regional support for the peace process.

As a longstanding partner of Afghanistan, Japan remains fully committed to supporting Afghanistan throughout and beyond the peace process. Japan has already provided \$135 million this year to address the negative impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and other humanitarian and development needs of the Afghan people. We are ready to consider additional support, depending on the progress in the peace process and the adherence of the Afghan Government to the Afghanistan Partnership Framework.

Annex XXVI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, Magzhan Ilyassov**

Kazakhstan commends the Estonian Presidency for hosting this debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We acknowledge with great appreciation the efforts of UNAMA under the sterling leadership of the Special Representative, Deborah Lyons, aimed at assisting the Afghan people and Government to achieve sustainable peace and development, and also recognize the important role of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Jean Arnault, in that regard.

Afghanistan is entering a critical phase in its history. We need to ensure that the upcoming withdrawal of United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization troops will not lead to the escalation of the conflict.

The only means to de-escalate the conflict and lay the foundations of stability in the country is dialogue, compromise and mutual understanding. We thus, once again, reiterate that the Afghan-owned, Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled settlement of the Afghan conflict is the only way forward. Kazakhstan hopes that the opposing parties will find compromise solutions in the interests of the people of Afghanistan.

According to the Monitoring Team's report, reducing violence and preventing insurgent forces from amassing new territories are the critical tasks the Security Council and the international community must address. The Team's report also warns that efforts should be made to ensure that the Government is not destabilized and weakened by attacks on soft targets like schools, worship sites, education centres, wedding halls or, now, even public buses.

Kazakhstan strongly condemns all targeted killings, attacks and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. We call on all actors to engage in the peace process in good faith and to translate their commitments into tangible actions for the benefit of all Afghans.

These call for implementing new national security policies and strategies to enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity and accountability of security institutions. It is, therefore, important to strengthen the military and police through comprehensive security sector reforms, as well as to promote the United Nations women and peace and security agenda by supporting national efforts to increase the representation of women at all levels, including in the security and defence sectors.

Kazakhstan supports the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan for peace, justice and prosperity. These could not be achieved without the preservation of the republican democratic system in Afghanistan. We are committed to ensuring that the gains in education, especially of women and girls, achieved in the past 20 years, are not reversed. The women and youth of Afghanistan are at the forefront of society and need to be given all opportunities for development and make their full contribution to society. The independent and free media also play a critical role in a democratic Afghanistan and should be protected.

We record the valiant efforts of UNAMA, which contributes to bilateral and multilateral deliberations and action of the Central Asian States with Afghanistan.

A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan has always been a priority for Kazakhstan. Considering Afghanistan as our important regional partner, we are working jointly with others to form an interregional model based on development, security and cooperation between Central Asia and Afghanistan. This is critical, as the future of Central Asia is directly related to the stability of Afghanistan.

Bearing in mind that the stability of Afghanistan is closely linked with its economic development, Kazakhstan will continue to provide long-term financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, as we did in 2020, through food, medicine and other humanitarian aid to pandemic-hit Afghanistan, and different forms of technical and financial support, both bilaterally and jointly with the United Nations and international partners. We will also continue to provide stipends for Afghan youth to study in leading Kazakh universities.

To enhance the country's infrastructure, and increase connectivity and access, Kazakhstan participates in the Khaf-Herat railway project to accelerate its completion. All these will transform Afghanistan into a viable self-sustaining economy and will contribute to the development of both Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Another noteworthy step we have taken is to establish the United Nations Regional Centre for Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty. The Centre will be based in the new United Nations building (which houses 18 United Nations agencies with regional and subregional mandates) in Almaty, opened in May 2019 by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. It aims to ensure efficiency and improved coordination between all stakeholders for delivering on the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. We believe that an expanded United Nations presence in Central Asia, through establishing the United Nations Regional Centre in Almaty, will contribute to sustainable development in the region, including in Afghanistan.

To conclude, Kazakhstan will join the multilateral effort, in partnership with our Central Asian neighbours, to lay the long-term foundations of enduring economic recovery and, consequently, stability and progress in the country.

Annex XXVII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations, Mirgul Moldoisaeva**

I thank Deborah Lyons, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan for a detailed briefing on the current situation in Afghanistan.

We are emphasizing the central role of the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, expressing appreciation and strong support for all of the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2405 \(2018\)](#).

On the other side, Kyrgyzstan is ready to contribute to the evolution of the peace process in Afghanistan within the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Moscow format, the Istanbul process, the Kabul process and other international platforms. We are proud to be a member of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan.

The Kyrgyz Republic is interested in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and calls for further cooperation with Afghanistan, the development of regional cooperation and confidence-building measures to resolve the situation in Afghanistan. We support the democratic reforms achieved by the Government of Afghanistan over the past decades in the country to protect freedom of speech, the rights of women and national minorities.

We strongly support the efforts made by the Afghan Government and the international community as a whole in the fight against terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, which pose a serious threat to regional security. Kyrgyzstan stands for a ceasefire and an end to violence in Afghanistan and calls on the conflicting parties to exercise restraint and to advance the peaceful dialogue launched in 2020 in Doha.

Before the pandemic, important regional events were held in Kyrgyzstan, where high-level representatives of the Government of Afghanistan, as well as non-governmental organizations, took an active part. In 2019, Bishkek hosted the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the third meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization-Afghanistan Contact Group, as well as conferences and seminars on regional issues of reducing violent extremism, using social networks to recruit international terrorist organizations, countering drug trafficking and the governance of natural disasters.

The Kyrgyz Republic provides possible assistance to Afghanistan. We implement bilateral projects to improve the skills of Afghan civil servants, educate Afghan students in educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic and carry out humanitarian missions to ethnic Kyrgyz living in the Small and Large Afghan Pamir. Also, the Kyrgyz side notes its full readiness to participate in the European Union and United Nations Development Programme programme for training Afghan women in the universities of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Kyrgyz Republic expresses its readiness to actively contribute to the economic recovery of Afghanistan. The Kyrgyz Republic is promoting initiatives to establish a trilateral agro-industrial consortium, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan. In order to develop transregional energy trade and transit the work in the framework of the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) international project of energy export by Central Asian countries to countries of Southern Asia through Afghanistan is being conducted. Within the framework of

the CASA-1000 project, the Kyrgyz side should export electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the amount of up to 1.5 billion kWh annually in the summer.

In order to substantively discuss the current agenda of Kyrgyz-Afghan relations, the Kyrgyz side proposed to hold the first meeting of the joint Kyrgyz-Afghan intergovernmental commission in Bishkek, as well as the next meeting of political consultations at the level of the deputy foreign ministers of the two States.

In conclusion, I would like to note the commitment of Kyrgyzstan to long-term cooperation with Afghanistan and all Central Asian partners, along with our international partners; we are ready for full cooperation to resolve the tasks before us. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is demonstrating to all of us that multilateral cooperation is the key to overcoming global challenges.

I would also like to wish peace and prosperity to the brotherly Afghan people.

Annex XXVIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram

We thank the President for convening this high-level quarterly meeting on Afghanistan.

We would also like to thank all the briefers, in particular the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, for her statement.

The peoples of Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably bound together by a common historical, religious, cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as shared destinies.

Pakistan has a vital interest in a peaceful, stable, united and prosperous Afghanistan. Apart from Afghanistan itself, no other country has suffered more than Pakistan as a result of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, in a recent statement said, and I quote: “Our country has suffered so much from the wars in Afghanistan. More than 70,000 Pakistanis have been killed.”

Pakistan has consistently maintained that the conflict in Afghanistan can be ended, not by military force, but through a political settlement involving the full spectrum of Afghanistan’s political landscape and through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

As the result of our efforts to facilitate the Afghan peace and reconciliation process, three major milestones were achieved in 2020: one, the United States-Taliban peace agreement signed on 29 February 2020; two, the commencement of intra-Afghan negotiations on 12 September 2020; and three, the agreement on rules and procedures between the Afghan parties in Doha on 2 December 2020.

Today, Afghanistan stands at a critical juncture in its history. It is important that the Afghan leaders seize the historic opportunity to reach an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We reiterate the need for a reduction in violence in Afghanistan, leading to a ceasefire. At the same time, we urge the need for a responsible and orderly withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, coinciding with the overall progress achieved in the peace process.

Any security vacuum in the country will be exploited by the “spoilers” that aim to subvert the peace negotiations and keep Afghanistan, as well as the region, in a state of constant conflict and turmoil. We must guard against all such spoilers who do not see peace and stability in Afghanistan serving their strategic interests.

In the current fluid political environment in Afghanistan, Pakistan has continued its efforts to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan at the bilateral, regional and international level.

Under the “troika plus” format, Pakistan, China, Russia and the United States held meetings on 18 March and 30 April, in Moscow and Doha respectively, to help galvanize the Afghan peace process by bringing together all the major stakeholders. This format can continue to make a contribution to reaching a political settlement.

The Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey held a trilateral meeting in Istanbul, on 23 April 2021, during which they reiterated their support for

the Afghanistan peace process and for the achievement of a just and durable political settlement of the Afghan conflict.

The fourth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue was held on 3 June 2021. It underscored the importance of a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict, through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, in addition to expressing the resolve to deepen cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and other regional mechanisms.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, held a meeting with the Secretary-General, António Guterres, on 20 May 2021, on the sidelines of the special session of the General Assembly on Palestine, during which he highlighted Pakistan's constructive efforts to facilitate the Afghan peace process.

Last week, the Pakistan Foreign Minister met with the Chairman of the Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Haneef Atmar, and the Head of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan, Salahuddin Rabbani, on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey and discussed ways to advance the Afghan peace process.

Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff also visited Kabul on 10 May 2021 and, in meetings with the Afghan leadership, discussed the Afghan peace process, bilateral security and defence cooperation, and the need for effective border management between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

All of these efforts – bilateral, regional and international – are testimony of Pakistan's strong desire to strengthen the prospects for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

Terrorism has had a devastating impact on Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries. The international community must not allow Afghanistan's territory to be used by Al-Qaida, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant or other international terrorist groups, like Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, to carry out attacks against any country.

Pakistan is especially concerned about the support being provided to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar by a third country, to operate and conduct the hundreds of cross-border attacks that have been launched against Pakistan from Afghanistan.

These Security Council-designated terrorist groups must not be allowed to operate against Pakistan from Afghanistan with external support. We call on the Council to take full cognizance of the terrorist activities of these groups and their sponsors.

Peace and stability in Afghanistan will usher in an era of prosperity for Afghanistan, as well as the broader region.

Promoting economic connectivity and regional trade is the key to lasting peace and security in Afghanistan. Through regional connectivity projects, Pakistan and Afghanistan can serve as a bridge connecting Central Asia and the Arabian Sea, offering immense economic opportunities to both countries and the region, and help Afghanistan reap the dividends of peace.

Pakistan is Afghanistan's largest trading partner and continues to provide critical support in the areas of agriculture, health, education and infrastructure development. We have committed over \$1 billion to development support in Afghanistan, including \$500 million for infrastructure and capacity-building projects.

Over the past four decades, Pakistan has provided all possible support to millions of Afghan refugees who sought safety and security on our soil. Pakistan

continues to host nearly 3 million Afghan refugees on its soil to this day. We are proud that we opened our homes for our Afghan brothers and sisters in their hour of need.

Concurrently with the peace process, we expect the international community to develop a time-bound and well-resourced plan for the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland and their reintegration in Afghanistan. This can provide a key component of endeavours to achieve lasting peace and security in Afghanistan.

Finally, I reiterate Pakistan's desire to see a peaceful, stable, united, democratic, prosperous and sovereign Afghanistan, at peace with itself and with its neighbours. Peace is within the grasp of the Afghan people. They must not let it slip away.

I end by quoting the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan: "We have no favourites and will work with any Government that enjoys the confidence of the Afghan people. History proves that Afghanistan can never be controlled from the outside."

Annex XXIX

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations

Poland would like to reaffirm its strong support for the leadership of the Special Representative, Deborah Lyons, and for all the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) aimed at bringing Afghan parties together and paving the way towards peace and stability. We commend the Mission's efforts focused on strengthening the Afghan State's capacity to protect civilians, defend and promote human rights and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of life. Poland fully endorses the Mission's approach based on promoting national ownership, as well as inclusive and accountable institutions that are built on the rule of law and good governance.

Poland would like to reiterate its support for the Afghanistan peace negotiations and for the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and of all other Afghan actors to advance towards a sustainable political solution. We are aware that the path leading to the final agreement will be long and difficult, but it is pertinent to continue the process started in September of last year. Poland believes that an indefinite postponement of the Istanbul Conference might mean losing another good opportunity to build peace in Afghanistan. Having said that, we sincerely hope that current impasse will be overcome shortly.

Poland is convinced that the situation in and around Afghanistan requires ample regional cooperation in different dimensions. In this vein, we welcome the appointment of Jean Arnault as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, and we wish the very best in his mission.

Unfortunately, the security situation in Afghanistan keeps deteriorating, and if the violence is not stopped, in the long run, this may derail the whole peace process. Daily attacks, often targeting civilians, continue in the country. We are deeply concerned about the current human security situation in Afghanistan, as we observe growing levels of violence and terrorism, conducted mainly by the Taliban, but also by other terrorist organizations like Da'esh, Al-Qaida of Khorasan State and Tehrik-i-Taliban. The security of people needs to be placed at the heart of conflict resolution and peacebuilding if we want a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous future for Afghanistan.

The protection of civilians, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable groups such as women, children and persons with disabilities, remains a crucial area of Poland's multilateral commitments. As stated in the report of Secretary-General, the armed conflict in Afghanistan lamentably continues to inflict serious casualties on children. On 8 May, a car bomb attack on a high school in Kabul killed at least 90 people and injured more than 150, many of whom were teenage girls. Poland condemns this outrageous attack in the strongest terms and is deeply concerned with the growing violence against education facilities in Afghanistan in recent months.

We must take decisive action against this flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. In this context, we reiterate our support for Security Council resolution [2573 \(2021\)](#), adopted unanimously by the Council in April, and we sincerely hope it will contribute to ensuring better protection of civilian infrastructure. At the same time, we underscore that the effect of the ongoing conflict on Afghan children and youth and their right to education should remain a matter of concern for the Council. We are also concerned about the fate of people with disabilities. Yesterday we marked the second anniversary of the adoption of Council resolution [2475 \(2019\)](#) on persons with disabilities in armed conflicts, proposed by

Poland and the United Kingdom. We call upon all actors in Afghanistan for its implementation.

Looking ahead to the Mission's mandate renewal before its September expiry, strengthening the Mission's child protection capacities should be treated as a matter of priority. Poland also highlights the importance of incorporating child protection considerations in the intra-Afghan talks. We urge the parties to the conflict to focus on child protection measures as early confidence-building steps in the negotiations, and we call for an immediate cessation of violence against children, and girls in particular. Child recruits and detainees need to be released at once, and we must monitor, report and respond to all abuses suffered by Afghan children in times of war. Poland stands ready to support any initiative within the United Nations framework aimed at ending and preventing these violations.

Poland is also committed to drawing the attention of the United Nations to the importance and the need for enhanced women's participation within the peace processes, both in terms of numbers and roles they play. A practical manifestation of this engagement is our work as a founding member within the United Nations Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan. We are convinced that the meaningful participation of women in all phases of Afghan peace process, including official negotiations, is a prerequisite of a real reconciliation. We also need to ensure that the outcome of negotiations recognizes, protects and promotes the role of Afghan women in all spheres of life.

Poland remains resolute to support the Government and people of Afghanistan in building a self-reliant, sovereign and democratic State, with transparent, inclusive and accountable governance. We have been present in Afghanistan for almost two decades, contributing to international stabilization efforts, as well as to the development of Afghanistan and the well-being of Afghan society. Today, we reiterate our commitment to continue to support Afghanistan in its efforts to achieve lasting peace and prosperity that leaves no one behind.

Annex XXX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu**

I thank Special Representative Lyons, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Waly, and the Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Ms. Akrami, for their briefings.

I salute the presence of Haneef Atmar, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, at this meeting.

The level of violence in Afghanistan has unfortunately reached very high levels. The Secretary-General has reported that, in the six months following the start of the peace talks in September 2020, the number of civilian casualties has increased substantially compared with the same period in 2019. This is cause for deep concern.

The high number of civilian casualties and targeted killings of journalists, civil society activists and human right defenders are deplorable. The worsening security situation, as well as the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and drought have further exacerbated the challenges faced by the Afghan people.

As a result, the risk of new waves of mass migration has been increasing. It is estimated that migration flows will further grow in the months ahead, following the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. This may have security and humanitarian implications in the wider region and beyond. Therefore, it is important for the international community to start working on comprehensive contingency planning to address this imminent challenge.

There can be no military solution in Afghanistan. The perspective of a negotiated settlement should be kept alive. The parties should reach an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and continue in good faith the negotiations for a political settlement.

Sustainable peace can only be achieved through an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process. To support and reinvigorate the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha, Turkey remains ready to host a high-level conference in Istanbul, together with Qatar and the United Nations. Such a conference will aim to give momentum to the ongoing Afghanistan peace negotiations, to end violence and to help achieve an inclusive negotiated settlement leading to lasting peace in Afghanistan.

To this end, the parties and, in particular, the Taliban should clearly show their genuine willingness to constructively take part in such an exercise.

We also continue to stress the need to strengthen political inclusion and national consensus within the Republic team.

At the same time, it is crucial to have an inclusive peace process, which includes women, youth groups and religious leaders. Broad-based ownership of the peace process can be achieved with the participation of all segments of Afghan society. This is indispensable for achieving lasting peace and the preservation of fundamental rights and freedoms. The gains made at significant costs over the last two decades cannot be sacrificed.

We also support an enhanced role for the United Nations in contributing to the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. A recent occasion in that regard has been the talks we held with the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnault, during his visit to the region.

It is certainly the region itself that has the greatest role, interest and responsibility in establishing and sustaining a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan.

Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation in support of peace, we have taken several initiatives to build confidence between Afghanistan and its neighbours and encouraged constructive and results-oriented dialogue. In that vein, we recently held trilateral meetings, with Afghanistan's key neighbours, namely Pakistan and Iran.

We particularly support regional efforts focusing on enhancing economic and infrastructure connectivity, to boost trade, transport, transit, energy and cultural cooperation. Turkey will continue its contributions to Afghanistan, inter alia within the multilateral platforms, including through the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

Over the last months, we have witnessed dastardly terrorist attacks in the country, claiming many innocent lives, including high school students and teenage schoolgirls. We once again condemn these heinous acts in the strongest terms.

The access of Afghan children to education has a central role in Turkey's assistance efforts in Afghanistan. As we did in the past, we will continue our support by building schools, providing assistance and changing the lives of hundreds of girls and their families. At the same time, we will maintain our active role in supporting the security of Afghanistan.

Despite significant challenges and threats that remain in the country, we will continue to support the Afghan people in their path towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. At this critical juncture, the international community should take stock of the contributions it has made and carefully assess the heavy cost of failing the Afghan people.
