



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8620th meeting

Tuesday, 17 September 2019, 11 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alfassam
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Mr. Lewicki
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2019/703)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2019/703)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Afghanistan to participate in this meeting.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2019/749, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Germany and Indonesia.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/703, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

The representative of Germany has asked for the floor.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): We appreciate the fact that the Council is ready to vote on draft resolution S/2019/749. We have been discussing the text with delegations. A revision has been proposed at the last minute by Afghanistan and is extremely important to Afghanistan. I am sorry to bring it up now at such a late stage, but it was submitted at the last minute.

I turn to sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, where it says, "provide outreach as well as good offices to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process", the Government of Afghanistan insists on adding "if requested by and in close consultation with the Government of Afghanistan".

As I said, I apologize for the late text revision. I think the words "Afghan-led" convey that idea clearly, but the Afghan Government has asked us to submit the revision. We are here to help the Afghan people and the Afghan peace process. We are here to support that country, which is in a difficult situation. The revision just came up now and we feel responsible to our Afghan friends. I therefore propose the aforementioned

revision. Of course, we have discussed this with our co-penholder and with the Chinese delegation, with which we were discussing and negotiating until late last night. Finally, I note that the proposed change is agreed language from previous resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Before commenting on the proposed revised, I would like to turn the members of the Council to see if there are any remarks. If we proceed from the premise that this paragraph is agreed, even if it was at the very last minute and despite the protracted consultations on this issue with the interested delegations, if delegations consent to the inclusion of this oral revision to the draft resolution and there are no objections, then we will vote on the resolution as revised.

As there are no objections, I request that the Secretariat inscribe this oral revision to the text of the resolution.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution, as orally revised, has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2489 (2019).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): First, I would like to thank my colleagues around the table for accepting a revision in this way. I very much appreciate that. As I said in my previous statement, what we are doing here today is supporting a people that has been under strain and embroiled in conflict and has been the victim of terrorist attacks. Last night, we saw two more terrorist attacks in Kabul.

I think that the adoption of resolution 2489 (2019) at this juncture sends a very important signal to the

Afghan people. It is a signal that the United Nations and the Security Council stand by the people of Afghanistan. We are sending the Afghan people the message that the United Nations stands by them. We do not just roll over the mandate but we add substantive points.

With regard to the peace process, I think it is very important that we now have a clear statement that it is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. For us, it is very important to focus now on the elections ahead, which is what the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is tasked with.

The text also considers the situation of women in the country, which is very high on the Council's agenda. The Deputy Secretary-General travelled to Afghanistan and reported to the Security Council about the situation of women. It is very important for that to be reflected in the text of the resolution. It is also critical that the text also addresses sexual violence and accountability. We note that the resolution also recognizes and highlights that both women and children are victims of the conflict and stresses respect for human rights.

I would like to thank our Chinese friends, who came to the negotiations with a different position and were able, after a long discussion, to strike a compromise that took all views into account. I also thank our Indonesian colleagues. Our teams worked for hours and did not sleep last night. I thank the entire Council for sending this strong message to the Afghan people today.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Before proceeding with my statement, let me too begin by expressing our condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan following the brutal attack in Kabul, which targeted an election rally in Parwan. Thus far, the attack has claimed the lives of at least 38 people. We condemn this attack in the strongest terms and hope that its perpetrators will be brought to justice.

Like my German colleague, allow me to thank the many delegations that supported Indonesia and Germany throughout the drafting of resolution 2489 (2019). Afghanistan is at a critical juncture and we want to make sure that the Council can best support the people of Afghanistan through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It is simply our core business to give UNAMA a solid and clear mandate that fully respects Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

During the debate on UNAMA on 10 September (see S/PV.8613), many countries sent a signal. We have listened to their positions very carefully. We have also listened to the views of all Council members, as well as to the calls of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Council. During the course of several negotiations, including one that continued until late last night, we tried to accommodate the positions and interests of various countries, and indeed we tried our best to strike a delicate balance.

The result is the current co-penholder text that we have just adopted. This text is acceptable to all and, most importantly, unifies the Council once again. That is the message that we want to send, and we are happy that Council members could join consensus in unanimously adopting the resolution, which we can be proud of. We have always believed that the unity of the Council would send a strong message of support to the people of Afghanistan and foster full confidence in the work of UNAMA.

We would like once again to thank all Council members for their flexibility, support and active engagement, which resulted in the adoption of a resolution that extends the UNAMA mandate for 12 months. We would also like to particularly thank our Chinese brothers, who were constructive throughout the process. The resolution is critically needed, bearing in mind that UNAMA's mandate will expire tonight. As witnessed, we are always at the last minute, but the Council has proven, once again, that it is able to reach a consensus decision. At this juncture, UNAMA's work is of crucial importance for the people of Afghanistan, as well as for the international community. Through the resolution, UNAMA will be able to fully support the Government of Afghanistan in holding the upcoming election scheduled for next week, on 28 September. We hope that the people of Afghanistan will have a credible, transparent and inclusive election. The international community stands with the people of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, as my colleague Mr. Heusgen did before me, I would like to thank all our experts and our political coordinator for their excellent work. I am quite sure that a promotion is in store for them. I would also like to thank all the experts from the other missions involved in the discussion. Once again, my thanks for reaching a consensus resolution. We hope this marks a new beginning.

The President: What can I say but better late than never? We are happy that we managed to reach consensus on the resolution.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): First, we wish to thank the co-penholders, Germany and Indonesia, for their diligence and commitment to drafting a new mandate that will provide the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) the guidance needed to advance its core mission. The United States voted in favour of resolution 2489 (2019) today to renew UNAMA for one year, with an updated mandate to address new developments on the ground.

Just last night, terrorist attacks targeted President Ghani's election campaign rally, claiming at least 26 lives. We condemn those horrific attacks and convey our sympathies to the victims. The attacks are yet another reminder of the critical role of UNAMA in supporting the people and the Government of Afghanistan and underscore the importance of the Security Council's duty to provide UNAMA with a strong and full mandate. This mandate renewal empowers the Mission to support elections, facilitate peace and reconciliation efforts and promote good governance and human rights. However, I should note that the reason we cannot empower the Mission with a stronger substantive mandate today is a member's insistence on language that highlights national political priorities rather than ways in which we can most effectively assist the people and the Government of Afghanistan.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the people of Afghanistan and to peace in their country. We look forward to working with the Mission, the Government and the people of Afghanistan and all Security Council members to advance peace, security and human rights in Afghanistan.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2489 (2019). I am delighted that the Security Council succeeded in demonstrating its renewed support for Afghanistan.

I would like to address my condolences to the Afghan people for the attack on an electoral rally of President Ghani last night.

I would like to express France's appreciation to Germany and Indonesia for their efforts to achieve a balanced text that provides the tools and political support that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) needs. We have heard

Afghanistan's request, expressed in this Chamber, for the maintenance of a strong and stable UNAMA presence. The mandate we have just adopted is in line with previous renewals, but also with the adjustments that were necessary to support Afghanistan at a crucial moment in its history, less than two weeks before the presidential election.

The presidential election must be credible and transparent. Its winner will bear the heavy responsibility of leading an inter-Afghan peace process in order to move forward on the road to peace. But Afghanistan cannot take that path alone. The international community's commitment must be unflinching, and it is that commitment that we have expressed today in renewing UNAMA's mandate for one year.

UNAMA contributes in an essential way to the pursuit of lasting peace in Afghanistan. We have just given it the necessary means to act during this uncertain time that is beginning by recalling what constitutes the core of its mandate, namely, support for peace efforts and the preparation of presidential elections, the coordination of development aid and humanitarian assistance and the promotion of human rights, particularly those of women.

The adoption of this resolution shows that the international community remains united in supporting Afghanistan on the path to peace, democracy and development. France will continue to work alongside its partners in that regard.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we would like to join others in condemning the regrettable attacks in Kabul and Parwan province and in extending to the people and the Government of Afghanistan our sincerest condolences for the loss of life.

Peru joined in the unanimous adoption of resolution 2489 (2019) because we believe that, in the current political and security context, it is vital to expand the scope of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to account for new developments. As the presidential elections draw near, we believe that the resolution will contribute to the objectives of stability, reconciliation, sustainable peace and the fight against corruption in Afghanistan.

In thanking Germany and Indonesia for their efforts to achieve consensus among all the members of the Council during the discussions on UNAMA's

mandate renewal, we highlight the flexibility shown by all participants in the negotiations and stress the importance of continuing to work to provide adequate monitoring and decisive support for UNAMA's work in its various functions.

I wish to conclude by welcoming the fact that, importantly, the Council is united in its commitment to Afghanistan and to the peace process undertaken and led by Afghans themselves.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the Russian presidency, China, Germany and Indonesia for their flexibility in the negotiations.

The Dominican Republic voted in favour of resolution 2489 (2019), on the understanding that it is an appropriate text that supports the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for a full year. At a time when efforts for lasting peace in Afghanistan seem uncertain, it is important that UNAMA continue to play a leading role in supporting the Afghan people in safeguarding and promoting the economic, political and social gains achieved thus far. Equally essential is the support that the United Nations can provide to the various peace talks and opportunities for dialogue taking place that address key issues in reducing violence and promoting a ceasefire.

The success of the peace process in Afghanistan requires not only political will, leadership and representation from all sectors of Afghan society, but also strong support from the international community and the Security Council. In that regard, UNAMA and all United Nations agencies firmly support efforts towards reconciliation and the promotion of human rights, especially the rights of women and children. We urgently call for the implementation of initiatives focused on the elimination of violence against women, the implementation of the national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and the protection of children's rights.

We want to emphasize the importance of an inclusive electoral process that allows for the active participation of women and youth and of ensuring that all measures are taken to safeguard the physical integrity of candidates and the security of polling stations, especially hospitals and schools.

We urgently call on the Taliban to halt its offensive on polling stations and electoral activities, as happened

today in Kabul and in Parwan province in an attack on the campaign rally of President Ghani, at which approximately 50 people died and 80 were injured.

Last but not least, we express our deep concern about the high number of civilian casualties, displaced persons, the severe humanitarian crisis, constraints on access to vulnerable areas and the adverse effects of climate change in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, a resolution such as the one we adopted today reaffirms our commitment to achieving peace for the Afghan people and acknowledges the sacrifices and challenges that the personnel of UNAMA face every day.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium today voted in favour of the compromise resolution 2489 (2019), on extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The language of the resolution provides UNAMA with a significant mandate, as well as the necessary political guidance to carry out its mission. We regret, however, that reaching a more substantial outcome was not possible owing, frankly, to an issue not pertaining to the mandate.

We thank both co-penholders for their efforts to ensure a transparent process and take into account the views of every delegation. During the negotiations, our delegation was fully and actively engaged in shoring up the guidance that the Security Council will provide the Mission. We placed particular focus on the issues concerning the situation of children; women and peace and security; demining; international humanitarian law; and climate and security.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Belgium's support for UNAMA and the Afghan people and express our unwavering solidarity with the latter on the heels of the latest attack that they just experienced.

Mr. Alfassam (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I join previous speakers in condemning the two terrorist attacks in Afghanistan yesterday. We express our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Afghanistan and wish those who were injured a speedy recovery.

The State of Kuwait voted in favour of resolution 2489 (2019), as we believe that it is important to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to provide the necessary support for the

Government and the people of Afghanistan during the next phase.

In conclusion, we express our appreciation for the great efforts of the co-penholders — Germany and Indonesia — which enabled the adoption of the resolution unanimously, thereby reflecting the unity of the Security Council regarding the situation in Afghanistan.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China condemns the bombing that occurred in Afghanistan on 17 September. China expresses its sympathy to the Government and the people of Afghanistan. We hope that the victims and their families will rebound from that tragedy as soon as humanly possible.

China is pleased by the unanimous adoption of resolution 2489 (2019), on the technical renewal of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), as it meets the expectations of the Afghan people and enables UNAMA to continue its work to fulfil its mandate. It also addressed all parties' concerns.

As an immediate neighbour, China would like to see nothing more than peace and stability in Afghanistan. China hopes for the realization of development and prosperity in that country. China places the utmost importance on the interests and well-being of the Afghan people. The interests of the people of Afghanistan are a most sincere priority for China. In order to achieve lasting peace in Afghanistan, we strongly believe that there must be impetus for economic development.

In order to maintain security and stability in that country, we must resolve security concerns. The unity of the Security Council must be maintained, and, to that end, we must respect the past consensus that we achieved. It must be stressed that helping the Afghan economy is vital to achieving lasting peace and stability in the country. That is what the Afghan people want, and no country has the right to deprive them of a better life.

China continues to emphasize that now is not the time to adopt a comprehensive resolution. A resolution concerning a technical renewal is the only solution. China has always participated in consultations with a responsible and constructive attitude on extending UNAMA's mandate and proposed revisions on adopting a comprehensive resolution. We regret that several countries refused to keep the consensus text previously agreed and to address other parties' core concerns. The

text also failed to address the possible security vacuum in Afghanistan. All of that led to serious divisions among parties.

It must be pointed out that someone said that promoting Afghanistan's regional cooperation and connectivity has nothing to do with the UNAMA mandate. That is an utter distortion of the UNAMA mandate. China would welcome the return of the countries concerned to the pathway of consultations on resolving problems and reaching consensus on the technical renewal of UNAMA's mandate. Facts show that confrontation is not the answer. We can rely only on cooperation to resolve issues, which is the shared expectation of the international community for the Security Council.

The situation in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. China supports Afghanistan in the holding of its general elections as scheduled, advancing the peace process, strengthening the capacity-building of the Afghan security forces and actively participating in regional cooperation and connectivity to lay a solid foundation for achieving lasting peace and stability.

China hopes that UNAMA will continue to act in accordance with its mandate to help Afghanistan with the holding of elections, connectivity, regional cooperation, security, counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics efforts and reconstruction, among other areas. China will continue to contribute to achieving peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): It is very nice to have the Afghan Ambassador with us.

As a number of people said earlier, this is a very significant time for Afghanistan, a country in which I had the honour to serve, on which I have worked many times in my diplomatic career and which I know well.

Others referenced the horrific suicide attack in Parwan province targeting President Ghani's election rally, which has reportedly killed 26 people and has been claimed by the Taliban. The United Kingdom joins others in condemning this unacceptable act of violence. We offer our condolences to the victims, their families and the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Let me reiterate what I said last week (see S/PV.8613). The leaders of the Taliban have a choice: they should condemn violence when it occurs and undertake to do everything in their power to stop the rest of their groups from carrying out violence. They should take sincere

steps for peace and to protect Afghan civilians. They do not speak for Afghanistan, and their claims to do otherwise are hollow.

We join others in being pleased that the Council has been able to agree on resolution 2489 (2019), which gives the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) a renewed mandate for 12 months. That means we have substantively strengthened our ability to offer support to Afghanistan and its people. We welcome UNAMA's ability to support the Afghan elections, including the presidential elections scheduled for 28 September. We are pleased that ability has been strengthened through the resolution. We were pleased that consensus was possible. We pay tribute to the co-penholders, our partners from Germany and Indonesia, who did a good job at managing a difficult process and, in particular, in managing to strengthen the language on human rights and women.

The United Kingdom has a long interest and history in Afghanistan. We are one of 39 countries providing troops to Afghanistan. And, sadly, we have seen our own troops die in Helmand province and elsewhere. When I was Ambassador we did a lot of work to foster economic progress for all the Afghan people in Kabul and many of the provinces. Hence the future of Afghanistan is something that I and my Government take extremely seriously. The Afghan Ambassador can rely on our commitment. She and I together chair the friends of women in the Afghan peace process.

However, I did want to join the representatives of the United States and Belgium in expressing my regret that the negotiations were made more difficult because of the position of one Council member, based on extraneous issues and exacerbated by initial non-engagement. That position prevented the Council from adopting an even stronger text, which was available yesterday. I am afraid that it also means that part of the text is, frankly, not comprehensible in the English language, which we regret because, pursuant to presidential note S/2017/507, we ought to be striving for focus and clarity in all texts of the Security Council. It means, in turn, that paragraphs of the resolution lack the clarity that UNAMA needs and requests in order to deliver its mandate at such a difficult time.

We therefore believe that the Council should strive for concision and clarity in its resolutions so that all stakeholders, including the missions mandated by the Council, are clear about the Council's intent. I

nonetheless wish to reassure the Ambassador of our strong message of commitment and support at a critical time. I hope that all Council members will reflect carefully on the result we have been able to achieve today and focus in future on what really matters: what the Council can achieve to the benefit of Afghanistan and its people, and not bilateral national initiatives.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): First of all, let me express our most heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan over the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul and Parwan province. Those attacks have demonstrated what kind of challenges the people and the Government of Afghanistan are facing in their struggle to achieve peace, security and stability for their own people. They have also demonstrated how important it is for the Security Council and the international community to send a strong signal of support for all the efforts of the Government and the brave people of Afghanistan on a daily basis. That is why Poland voted in favour of resolution 2489 (2019). We are happy that the Security Council united today to send this very strong signal.

Poland actively participated in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the new mandate for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I wish to praise the co-penholders, our colleagues from the Permanent Missions of Indonesia and Germany, for the tireless and, ultimately, very successful efforts. Nevertheless, this document is not perfect.

We would have liked to have seen stronger and clearer language on the protection of civilians and on women's empowerment and their profound role in peace and security. We are disappointed with the lack of any reference to the role and significance of NATO and the European Union in Afghanistan. And we are particularly disappointed because more than 40 Polish soldiers perished serving the people of Afghanistan within the NATO-led coalition. We also hoped to include references to climate change affecting the security and social situation in Afghanistan.

However, we voted in favour based on our understanding that the text reflects the compromise required in this Chamber. We voted in favour because we managed to achieve our primary goal, which was to provide UNAMA with a mandate that allows the Mission and the international community to support the Afghan people on the path to peace and prosperity. A

technical rollover would, to be certain, not have served that purpose.

Afghanistan is facing another important challenge over the coming weekend. The presidential election elections scheduled for 28 September should prove that the country's political elite is determined to bring peace and sustainable development to the people of Afghanistan. We strongly believe that the election will be held in a credible, inclusive and transparent manner with the full and safe participation of women and other marginalized communities.

By adopting this new resolution on UNAMA's mandate, the Security Council has proved that we can all unite and strike a compromise when serious challenges must be addressed. We believe that in the future negotiations members of the Security Council should seek to reach such a compromise without postponing it to the last minute. But I cannot agree more with Ambassador Meza-Cuadra: better late than never. Nevertheless, we should do our best to be more predictable and renew mandates before the very last minute, as such an approach would strength trust and cooperation among Council members.

Mr. Adom (Cote d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor on behalf of the three African States that are non-permanent members of the Council to condemn in the strongest possible terms the two attacks perpetrated in Kabul during an electoral rally organized by President Ashraf Ghani. We express our sincerest condolences to the Afghan people and Government.

I would also like, on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, to welcome the unanimous renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We commend the co-penholders, Indonesia and Germany, as well as China, for the spirit of compromise and flexibility they demonstrated in the course of the negotiations. We can now only hope that resolution 2489 (2019) and the presence of UNAMA will help the Afghan people to speedily restore an atmosphere of peace and security conducive to comprehensive development.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

First, like other members of the Council, I extend our deepest condolences to our Afghan friends — the people and the Government of Afghanistan — in the

wake of the tragic terrorist attack that occurred in the country on 17 September.

Today the Russian Federation voted in favour of resolution 2489 (2019), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for 12 months. We attach great importance to the role of the Mission in coordinating the provision of international humanitarian assistance to the country. We note the selfless efforts of United Nations staff in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

We believe that the consensus-based document adopted by the Council will send a message to the people of Afghanistan that the entire international community is committed to long-awaited peace in that long-suffering country. That policy is more important than ever before, at a time when fundamental changes are under way in Afghanistan. Making the peace process in Afghanistan as inclusive as possible is of critical importance. The main goal is to seek a sustained national reconciliation arrangement with the involvement of all of the country's social and political stakeholders. At the same time, it is of course crucial to ensure that the Afghan people continue to play the key role in resolving their own issues.

The Russian Federation works to ensure that all Afghan political forces, without exception, and all key external players operate on a unifying platform towards the same objective. We reaffirm our commitment to working in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, all political forces in the country and regional and international partners. We also look forward to the resumption of the United States-Taliban dialogue and the prompt conclusion of an agreement between the United States and the Taliban, as well as the launch of direct intra-Afghan negotiations.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mrs. Raz (Afghanistan): We thank the Security Council for adopting resolution 2489 (2019), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for 12 months. It signifies the Council's support for Afghanistan at a time when the people of Afghanistan are entering a new and crucially important phase of their long-standing efforts to achieve peace and prosperity.

On 28 September, our people will vote in the upcoming presidential election and again prove their everlasting commitment to consolidating democracy as a key imperative for a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. The Government and the people of Afghanistan are fully prepared for that important national event, which will strengthen the pillars of constitutional governance and the rule of law in our country. At the same time, consistent with our long-standing commitment to peace, we stand fully committed to advancing an effective peace process that conforms with and meets the fundamental needs of our people — a dignified peace that holds and protects human rights and our democratic gains, which are embraced and accepted by the people of Afghanistan.

I wish to reiterate the importance of the principle of Afghan ownership and leadership in the context of peace efforts and that all international support measures should serve to complement and reinforce our national efforts. In that regard, we thank the United Nations — the Council in particular — and other partners in the international community for their continued support in our journey for a stable and representative Afghanistan, especially in our joint efforts to further empower women in the country. That expression of support was highlighted in the Council's meeting on Afghanistan last week (see S/PV.8613), for which we are grateful.

Afghanistan also places great importance on the region and regional cooperation. In that regard, we

prioritize economic projects that help us and Afghanistan to better strengthen connectivity. Looking ahead, we are aware that the future is not void of challenges and difficulties. That said, I can state with full confidence that the determination of Afghans to achieve success is greater than the challenges we confront. In that regard, I would like to make reference to last night's attack by the Taliban, in Parwan at an election campaign rally, which took the lives of more than 26 people. Once again, we request the Council to call on the Taliban to stop the killing of civilians, especially those who will participate on election day.

We in Afghanistan look forward to continuing our partnership with the Council and the brotherly international community to complete the mission on which we embarked together in 2001. I must say that we have made tremendous achievements since then, which we all need to preserve and build on. Allow me to again thank the United Nations and the Security Council for accompanying us in this very difficult journey and standing beside us, in support and solidarity, as we prepare to hold that important election on 28 September and to secure democracy and peace in Afghanistan.

I will conclude by thanking the delegations of Germany and Indonesia for leading the difficult negotiations in the lead-up to the adoption of today's resolution. I think our colleagues need a raise.

The meeting rose at noon.