



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

40th plenary meeting

Monday, 9 November 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 17

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/364)

Draft resolution (A/64/L.8)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.8.

Mr. Ney (Germany): The international community is willing and committed to continue to support the Afghan people in their efforts to shape their own destiny, establish sustainable peace and security, and rebuild their country despite ongoing terrorist threats. This is the key message of General Assembly draft resolution A/64/L.8 on the situation in Afghanistan, which I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly today.

The debate and adoption of the draft resolution give us, the members of the General Assembly, the timely opportunity to renew our clear message of international solidarity to the Afghan people.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed last week, we will not be deterred by the recent despicable attacks by the Taliban targeting the international community in Kabul. We pay homage to the innocent people who lost their lives and extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims. Our thoughts are also with all those Afghans and other

nationals who have lost their lives as a result of the Taliban insurgency.

Afghanistan experienced the first presidential elections run entirely under the responsibility of the Afghan authorities. The international community witnessed with admiration the courage of the Afghan people who cast their votes despite serious security threats. We welcome the conclusion of the presidential electoral process and congratulate President Karzai on his second term in office.

It is at this point that I should like to extend the sincerest thanks and profound gratitude of my Government to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Kai Eide, and his team within the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for supporting the Afghan institutions during the elections. I should also like to extend my thanks to the security forces in Afghanistan for their efforts to provide security during the electoral process to the extent possible. The good performance of the Afghan media and the Afghan election observers also deserves praise.

As Afghanistan continues to face significant challenges, we emphasize that President Karzai should move swiftly to form a Government that is able to meet the challenges. We should continue to encourage all political actors in Afghanistan to respect the rule of law and to continue to take responsibility for the stability and unity of Afghanistan. In this regard, Germany welcomes President Karzai's most recent commitment to instituting reforms and to actively fighting corruption. We hope that effective measures, such as

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the strengthening of the anti-corruption commission, will be taken to ensure good governance and to create an enabling legal and political environment for stability, as well as economic and social development and growth through private investment in Afghanistan.

The draft resolution before us is a well-balanced call on Member States for continued cooperation with the Afghan Government and on the new Afghan Government “to build a renewed relationship of trust with its citizens by achieving concrete and visible results” (*A/64/L.8, fourth preambular paragraph*). The draft reflects the views expressed in informal consultations. I wish to seize this opportunity to thank the numerous delegations that participated actively in the informal consultations for all their valuable contributions.

I should like briefly to point out four elements of the draft resolution that have been discussed most intensively during the informal consultations. First, all delegations underlined the importance of the protection of the civilian population. On the one hand, the draft resolution clearly stresses the fact that the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist and criminal groups are responsible for the wide majority of civilian casualties in Afghanistan and continue their despicable tactics of using civilians as human shields. On the other hand, it also calls on the security forces to continue their intensified efforts aimed at ensuring the protection of civilians. This will require the continued review of tactics and procedures and the conduct of after-action reviews and investigations.

Secondly, delegations felt a need to recall the importance of upholding international obligations for the advancement of women’s rights, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution.

Thirdly, delegations exchanged their views on the prospects of an internal political dialogue aimed at establishing sustainable peace in Afghanistan. They agreed that the draft resolution should encourage the implementation of reintegration, reconciliation and transitional justice processes led by the Afghan Government aiming at reintegrating those who are ready to renounce violence, denounce terrorism, accept the Afghan Constitution, and commit themselves to working constructively for peace, stability and development in the framework of the Afghan Constitution.

Fourthly and finally, delegations welcomed ongoing efforts by the Governments of Afghanistan and its partners in the region to foster trust and cooperation with each other. Delegations encouraged further initiatives to increase regional cooperation in order to promote security, stability, peace and economic development in Afghanistan and in the region.

The second presidential election in Afghanistan marked an important step in the democratic history of the country. This is the time for the Afghan people and the international community alike to take stock, look ahead and assess the challenges we are facing. France, Germany and the United Kingdom have jointly proposed that the Secretary-General take the initiative to co-chair an international conference on Afghanistan in cooperation with the new Afghan Government. We appreciate the support expressed by the Secretary-General for this initiative, and welcome the first steps taken by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kai Eide in this regard.

If we want to succeed, it is of crucial importance that we jointly revisit our goals. These goals must include security, good governance, the rule of law and human rights, as well as the economic and social development of Afghanistan. We should agree on new, specific and measurable benchmarks and timelines in order to establish a joint framework for the transition phase ahead towards increased Afghan ownership. In view of such a framework, Germany is committed to continuing its support to the Afghan people and to cooperating fully and constructively with the new Afghan Government. Germany is planning to further enhance its contribution to the international reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

Germany aligns itself fully with the statement that will be delivered by the Swedish presidency of the European Union later in the debate.

Finally, I would like to conclude by extending my heartfelt thanks to my colleague Ambassador Zahir Tanin and his Deputy Permanent Representative, Erfani Ayoob, for their trust, cooperation and friendship, which we have been privileged to enjoy.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): Thirty years ago, in December 1979, Soviet forces entered Afghanistan. Since then, Afghanistan has been the victim of perpetual war, violence and conflict. Constant upheaval has torn the country from a peaceful, progressive path

and thrust it into the global spotlight. The General Assembly has repeatedly gathered to reiterate its solidarity with the Afghan people.

However, while we debated here, the floodgates of hell opened in Afghanistan. What was once a stable, modernizing country and a role model for other States in the region became a name without a State, a vast wasteland of shattered lives. One hundred years of social, political and economic progress were destroyed. What is worse, 2 million people were killed and 10 million more fled for their own safety. That is the true tragedy of my country and my people. Now, eight years after the fall of the Taliban, eight years after we all believed that the long national nightmare of the Afghan people had at last come to an end, violence still threatens the lives of Afghans in many parts of the country.

The draft resolution (A/64/L.8) before us today reflects an awareness of our common responsibility to address the situation in Afghanistan and reaffirms the strong determination of the membership towards this end. For this support, the Government and people of Afghanistan are deeply grateful.

In this regard, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, and all the members for their presence here today and for so widely and strongly supporting the draft resolution now before us. Allow me to also express my sincerest thanks to the German Mission, in particular Ambassador Martin Ney, Counsellor Daniel Krull and his able team, for their substantial efforts and able facilitation of the draft resolution.

The past eight years have been difficult, but the situation in Afghanistan has fundamentally improved. Eight years ago, we were debating how to build what did not exist: a Government, an army and police force, and a functioning economic and social life. Today, we are debating how to improve what we have built and how to have a good, effective Government, a well-trained army and police and a productive economy. Today, Afghanistan's flag flies proudly across the country. This is a substantial accomplishment.

Unfortunately, our progress has not been sufficient. We have allowed three crucial opportunities to slip through our fingers.

First, we missed the chance to wipe out the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other terrorists. After their initial

defeat, we permitted them to rearm and regroup in sanctuaries outside Afghanistan. As a result, they returned to threaten us in 2006, and the security situation has deteriorated markedly.

Secondly, we missed the chance to properly resource and reinforce our efforts. Afghanistan has been starved for resources, starved for attention and starved for troops. Our responses have been reactive, ex post facto and fragmented.

Thirdly, we missed the chance to rapidly empower and enable Afghans to shoulder the responsibility for their own destiny. The Government and civil society lack capacity, experience and resources.

Thankfully, within the past two years, the Government of Afghanistan and the international community have together begun to craft a common approach. We are beginning to offer the necessary resources to combat a resurgent Taliban. We have strengthened the important United Nations mandate for coordination. We have begun to build capacity to address weak governance and fragile institutions. We have built a strengthened partnership with the elected Government in Islamabad, and we are working together towards real cooperation in the fight against our common enemy. Finally, with the holding of the second presidential elections in our history, Afghans are again able to have a say in their future.

The elections marked the beginning of a new chapter in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the elections were held in difficult circumstances. In many regions, voters risked their lives to participate. Despite this, however, millions voted, and millions more participated in the debates surrounding the campaigns.

Elections are not perfect anywhere. They are even less perfect in an emerging democracy threatened by conflict. The Afghan people worked tirelessly, not on the sidelines but as leaders of our institutions. Complaints and irregularities were uncovered and addressed in a meticulously fair and systematic way. The elections were as free as possible, as fair as possible and as transparent as possible. Most importantly, the people of Afghanistan showed respect for the rule of law. All of Afghanistan patiently and peacefully awaited a legal, constitutional outcome and are now prepared to accept that outcome. This has been a peaceful transition.

The re-election of President Karzai has ended a period of uncertainty and an extended pause in our reconstruction and stabilization efforts. The President-elect, in his first address, emphasized that we need to seize this unique moment. Over the next five years, the new Government of Afghanistan will create and maintain two compacts, one with the Afghan people and one with the international community. Together, these pacts will help forge strong, constructive partnerships and will lead Afghanistan to sustainable progress.

The principal compact is with the people of Afghanistan and will be based on a continuing commitment to ensuring the physical and economic security of Afghans, providing good governance and ensuring the rule of law, and encouraging economic development. To achieve these three aims, President-elect Karzai has identified four areas of focus: national participation, reconciliation, Afghanization and tackling corruption.

The need for Afghans to take control of their destinies is central to this compact. In an ongoing effort to build capacity and wash out the stain of corruption, Afghans should assume increasing responsibility for governance, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In training the army and police, Afghans can take on a greater role in ensuring security, enforcing the law and leading counter-narcotics efforts.

The Government represents all Afghans. The Government serves all Afghans. We are committed to greater national participation in the political and reconstruction processes. In addition, we will continue to welcome any Afghan who is willing to join the peace process and respect the Afghan Constitution. In undertaking these commitments, the new Government of Afghanistan will work actively and constructively with the region and the broader international community alike.

In building a prosperous and democratic Afghanistan, security is at the core of all our efforts. Security is not only an end in itself; it is also an important prerequisite for progress in other areas. Insecurity is a barrier to good governance and sustainable development, and is the single biggest threat to human rights. Insecurity prevents Afghans from putting aside their guns to concentrate on rebuilding their lives, and it breeds corruption, fear,

hopelessness and despair. We will never earn the trust of Afghans while they are constantly subjected to terror. We must first help them feel secure.

However, our aim is not to kill every Taliban fighter. We have to use political and military strategies together in order to expand the reach of the Government, train the Afghan army and police, isolate the Taliban from the people, earn the trust of the people and encourage the engagement of Afghan civilians in the peace and reconciliation process.

The sole strength of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and their terrorist allies lies in their brutality. Afghanistan needs a military and civilian strategy that centres on the security of the Afghan people and offers them real protection from the threats of the Taliban and the unintended consequences of counter-terrorist operations. NATO's new strategy is a promising and responsible step in this direction.

However, the Government's tremendous objectives will not be achieved in one day. We will achieve nothing by setting premature deadlines. We will achieve nothing without the consistent political, military and financial support of the international community. Most important, we will achieve nothing without mutual understanding built on trust and cooperation.

Recent public debate about Afghanistan has strained this understanding. Afghanistan both respects and understands the legitimate concerns of the international community. We ask the world to respect and understand the views and concerns of Afghans. All stakeholders deserve sincere, credible partners. We need a partnership built on real solidarity.

For this reason, the Government of Afghanistan will focus on building and renewing a second compact — a compact with the international community. This compact should rest on the strong foundation of our shared commitment to pursuing security, development and good governance in Afghanistan and the region. Together, we should seek rational and well-resourced common strategies with realistic timelines. In this regard, we welcome the call for an international conference to refresh and renew our partnership and build a solid foundation for our future work together. The recent attack on the dedicated United Nations workers in Kabul shows that our partnership is under attack from the outside. We must strengthen it from the inside.

The key to the future of Afghanistan is in the hands of the Afghan people. They are the masters of their destiny. The Taliban do not represent Afghans. Their power is the power of destruction. Their strength lies only in brutality. Let us make a strong relationship between the Afghan people and the international community the bedrock of our strategies. Let us use today's draft resolution on Afghanistan to demand more from ourselves and our partners alike. Alone, we will fail, but together we can and will succeed.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the conclusion of the presidential electoral process and congratulates President Hamid Karzai on winning a second term in office. This autumn, we have seen important developments in Afghanistan. The first elections to be organized by the Afghan authorities in several decades took place. The European Union has supported these elections and the Afghan institutions responsible for conducting them throughout the process and will continue to do so.

Lessons should be learned from this round of elections. The European Union stands ready to assist Afghanistan in reviewing and improving the electoral system, especially in view of the elections to be held next year, while we also note that addressing some of the issues related to the electoral system will require attention in the longer term as well.

On 27 October, the European Union took an important decision in adopting a plan for strengthened EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The plan reflects the strategic importance that the European Union attaches to the region. The EU will increase its efforts strategically, politically and financially, as well as through the contribution of technical assistance, in order to help move developments in a positive direction.

The European Union expects that a credible and competent Government that addresses the major challenges facing the country will be formed without delay and that it will promote national unity in order to regain legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people. The European Union is ready to engage early and

substantially with such a Government, on the basis of the European Union's plan of action.

The debate on the annual resolution on the situation in Afghanistan is an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its support for the Afghan people and its path towards peace, security and democracy. We thank Germany for its initiative again this year and for having managed this draft resolution so well. The end result reflects both the progress that has been achieved and the challenges remaining in Afghanistan, as well as the international community's unanimous support for the Afghan Government's efforts to consolidate a stable and democratic country.

The European Union expresses its continued strong support for the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and all United Nations personnel for their important work in assisting Afghanistan despite the tragic loss of life during the suicide attack on United Nations personnel in Kabul on 28 October.

The European Union salutes half a century of United Nations commitment to Afghanistan and hopes that it will be possible, following its security review, for the United Nations presence there to return to full strength. The European Union understands the difficult security situation under which the United Nations operates in Afghanistan, supports the need to ensure the safety of United Nations staff accordingly, and looks forward to further discussions on proposals from the Secretary-General in that regard.

Following the completion of the elections and with a new Government in place, the EU looks forward to the Government of Afghanistan's rapidly addressing the challenges facing the nation by developing a reform agenda with concrete commitments to the Afghan people. Such an agenda should include improving governance and fighting corruption, as well as addressing security and improving the rule of law.

The European Union also looks forward to the international conference, which will offer an opportunity for the new Afghan Government to lay out its priorities, plans and commitments. The United Nations should have a prominent role in that conference. For the international community, it will be an occasion to review and reaffirm its engagement in Afghanistan. Jointly, we should agree on new goals, benchmarks and timelines in order to formulate a joint framework for our work towards the common goal of an Afghanistan living in peace and security.

The European Union member States are deeply involved in Afghanistan, and the EU is a key contributor to its reconstruction. The EU and its member States are spending nearly €1 billion a year on civilian efforts in Afghanistan. The troop contribution of EU member States to the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force amounts to approximately 30,000, which is the heaviest EU military engagement in a long time.

The focus of the international presence in Afghanistan is on safeguarding a stable security environment to make development possible. Maintaining security is currently a responsibility shared between the Afghan national security forces and the international community. Ultimately, our highest priority should be to enable the Afghan national security forces to carry out that responsibility on their own. The European Union concurs, needless to say, with the view that everything possible should be done to avoid civilian casualties.

Building Afghan capacity and strengthening national ownership in the civilian sectors remain at the core of the European Union's engagement in Afghanistan. The EU will increase its support, for example, in the areas of good governance, the rule of law, including justice, and the fight against corruption. We urge the next Government of Afghanistan to give priority to the achievement of progress in those areas, not least at the subnational level. Further, we underscore the need for concrete improvements in the protection of human rights, including the rights of women, and stand ready to support a new Government in that regard.

The framework for political, social and economic development in Afghanistan is the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan National Development Strategy and the principles agreed at the Paris and Hague Conferences on Afghanistan. The European Union will further enhance and improve its contributions to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development through a common approach, as well as bilaterally through individual member States.

Without doubt, stability, security and development in Afghanistan are closely linked to the overall situation in that region. The EU strongly supports the development of a coordinated approach at the regional level and enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, especially Pakistan. The EU

particularly acknowledges Pakistan's key role for stability in the region. We welcome the progress that has been achieved in the bilateral dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The European Union will concentrate its efforts on strengthening State capacity and institutions to promote good governance, human rights and efficient public administration, especially at the subnational level. The EU will focus on strengthening the rule of law by assisting in the building of a civilian police force through the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan. We will also support economic growth, especially through rural development and improved regional cooperation. The EU strongly supports the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in its important role as coordinator of international efforts. We recognize the responsibility of member States to assist UNAMA in performing that task. Additional UNAMA provincial offices are a welcome contribution.

The EU reiterates that the primary responsibility for the development of the country lies with the Afghan Government and the people themselves. I would like to assure the Assembly that the European Union will continue to play an active role in assisting Afghanistan on its road to security, stability and prosperity in close cooperation and coordination with UNAMA and other international actors.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan.

In recent years, the authorities of Afghanistan have managed to achieve definite progress in State-building and the strengthening of democratic institutions. The presidential and local elections held in Afghanistan serve as a vivid example of that. We expect a new effective Government to be formed soon.

Referring to the recent attack on the United Nations mission in Kabul, we decisively condemn the actions of terrorists and call on the Government of Afghanistan to guarantee an appropriate level of security both to the United Nations mission in Afghanistan and to all foreign missions accredited in that country.

The new Afghan authorities will encounter unprecedented challenges. The Taliban's position is stronger than ever since they were toppled. Al-Qaida remains very active. Much remains to be done in the field of socio-economic rehabilitation. The security situation is still of key importance to the further reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

In that respect, neither the Afghan authorities nor the international community can abandon their efforts to isolate extremist leaders, especially those on the sanctions list of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). An opportunity to return to normal political life should be offered only to those who renounce violence, armed combat and their ties with Al-Qaida and the Taliban movement and recognize the Constitution and the legitimate Government of Afghanistan. All talks should be held only by the legitimate authorities of Afghanistan.

Our countries pay the utmost attention to fighting drug trafficking, which is a source of financing terrorist activity. Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that international endeavours to fight the illicit production and distribution of narcotics from the territory of Afghanistan have yet to prove effective. The international military presence in Afghanistan possesses all the tools necessary for a more efficient struggle against that evil. We support more comprehensive international cooperation to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1735 (2006), including with regard to those who use resources gained from the production of illicit drugs and precursors to finance terrorist groups. Security Council resolution 1817 (2008), intended to impose international control over the circulation of precursors, remains relevant.

We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to strengthen cooperation with the CSTO on countering the illicit production and trafficking of drugs. We are convinced that only through the Afghan Government's full involvement in the fight against that evil can substantial improvements be made in reducing the global level of opiate production. We believe it necessary to significantly strengthen anti-narcotic efforts both in the territory of Afghanistan and around it by creating belts of anti-narcotic and financial security with the participation of neighbouring countries.

The CSTO possesses vast experience in countering the illicit circulation of drugs on the Afghan

track. One of the most successful and effective formats of the CSTO countries' practical cooperation to curb the interregional and international supply of drugs is Operation Channel, which has had the status of a permanent regional CSTO anti-narcotics operation since September 2008.

Every year the number of countries participating in Operation Channel expands. In accordance with the decision of CSTO heads of State, the first stage of Channel 2009, a complex operational and prevention operation, was completed between 22 and 28 September. Participants included drug enforcement agencies of the CSTO member States; authorized representatives of law-enforcement bodies from Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Venezuela, Germany, Iran, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the United States, Turkey, Ukraine and Estonia; and financial investigation operatives from States members of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Representatives of law-enforcement bodies from Bulgaria, Germany, Venezuela and Turkey participated in the endeavour for the first time.

The participants were tasked with several objectives, chief of which were blocking illicit trafficking channels into Eurasian countries for opiates from Afghanistan, synthetic drugs from Europe and cocaine from Latin America, and preventing illicit supplies of precursors to the Central Asian republics and Afghanistan, as well as confiscating illegal arms, ammunition and explosive materials, and preventing the laundering of drug money. The operation involved 139,000 officers of drug enforcement agencies, security forces, law enforcement agencies, police forces and border services. More than 9,000 joint rapid response groups and 7,000 fixed stations were created in border regions at rail, air and road transportation facilities. More than 2,000 rail junctions and stations, 725 airports and almost 4,500 roads were closed off.

Operations were conducted in regions directly adjacent to Afghanistan. This permitted the interception of large, wholesale shipments of drugs. Based on a previously tested scheme of interaction and information exchange between the operational department of the international coordination headquarters and the Russian Financial Monitoring Service, an examination of financial operations suspected of being connected to illicit drug trafficking activity was organized. In the course of the operation more than 30 tons of psychotropic, narcotic and other hard drugs were seized.

More than 6,000 charges for crimes pertaining to illicit drug trafficking were made, more than 26,000 criminal cases initiated and 5,400 people were tried for crimes involving illicit drug deals; 531 of those individuals were members of criminal organizations. Approximately 849 firearms and more than 34,000 items of ammunition were confiscated.

The strengthening of the anti-drug zones should be supplemented by creating financial security cordons around Afghanistan. This means not only intercepting drug shipments but also imposing stronger controls on the transnational movement of income from drug trafficking, money-laundering and other criminal activities, including financing terrorism.

This year the CSTO member States took an active part in a number of significant international forums on the question of Afghanistan, including the Special Conference on Afghanistan held in Moscow under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The CSTO strongly believes that effectively resolving the situation in Afghanistan and addressing the serious issues on the Afghan Government's agenda are unattainable without an integrated approach on the part of the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations. Such efforts, though, will not yield the benefits hoped for without delegating more independence to Kabul in solving Afghanistan's internal problems, above all by creating the conditions that will enable the Afghan Government to be self-sufficient in providing national security.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): Eight years have passed since the Taliban were defeated and the reconstruction of Afghanistan began. There have been positive developments, particularly in the socio-economic field. But many Afghans are becoming impatient and say that too little is happening, too late. The deteriorating security situation is a cause of suffering for the population and grave concern in the international community. It is therefore necessary to ask how we and the Afghan Government should prioritize, and where we can improve our performance. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) plays a key role in finding constructive answers to these questions.

Against this backdrop, Norway looks forward to the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of draft resolution A/64/L.8, on the situation in Afghanistan. The broad support for this draft resolution

among all States Members of the United Nations sends an important message: the international community has a common wish for improved security, political stability and development for the people of Afghanistan.

Following the fatal attack on United Nations staff in Kabul on 28 October, it is imperative that we express our strongest support for the Organization in Afghanistan. We welcome the recent efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure protection of his own United Nations staff. Norway is committed to assisting the United Nations so that it can continue its indispensable work in a safe manner. The attack was a brutal reminder that our common goal — security and stability in Afghanistan — is still a long way off. It also shows how crucial it is that the efforts of the United Nations, NATO and a united international community in Afghanistan be predictable and have a long-term perspective. It is deeply tragic that the United Nations, whose mandate includes working for peace, stability and improved coordination, has been hit so hard.

We are very pleased that the key role played by UNAMA in Afghanistan is reflected in the significant increase in the Mission's budget for 2010. Only with a sufficient level of predictable funding will UNAMA be able to implement its mandate effectively. We should not expect more from the United Nations than we are willing to invest in it.

The Afghan presidential election and its aftermath this year illustrated clearly how challenging conducting elections in conflict-affected areas can be. Following a lengthy and difficult election process, President Karzai will be inaugurated as Afghanistan's next President on 19 November, and soon thereafter a new Afghan Government will be formed. With the election concluded, the new Afghan Government has to demonstrate a genuine interest in fulfilling basic and crucial commitments to the Afghan people and the international community. If not, the new Administration risks losing support. The legitimacy of the next Karzai Government will be decided by the actions they take in the near future and judged by the Afghan people.

It is not only the people of Afghanistan but also the international community that is formulating expectations and demands. President Karzai and the new Afghan Government will have to commit themselves on a larger scale and take all necessary measures to combat corruption and the culture of impunity; improve governance, particularly at local

levels and including strengthening the rule of law; protect human rights and women's rights; improve the security situation; and increase their capacity to deliver basic services to the Afghan people. As members of the international community, we must stand ready to assist the next Afghan Government in meeting these demanding commitments to the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Sial (Pakistan): Pakistan's delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, as it provides a timely opportunity for Member States to review progress towards the realization of our shared objectives of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. We have a vital stake in achieving this objective.

Pakistan has inseparable bonds of geography, history, faith and culture with Afghanistan, bonds that link the destinies of our two nations. No other country has suffered more than Pakistan from the consequences of the conflict and the human tragedy in Afghanistan. It has impacted our social and economic fabric, disturbed the peace and tranquillity of our border regions and given rise to the common threat of extremism and terrorism. The people of Pakistan have shared the sorrows of their Afghan brethren. Therefore, we see our own prosperity reflected in the prosperity of Afghanistan.

Our vision of common strategic and economic interests positions Pakistan and Afghanistan to play their rightful role as partners forming the hub for the shortest and the most economical corridors for trade in raw materials, goods and energy among Central Asia, South and West Asia and beyond. We feel that our economic and trade potential will remain untapped unless Afghanistan is peaceful and stable and that vision reinforces our efforts and commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is of the view that peace and economic development in Afghanistan can only be brought about by a stable Government enjoying majority support of the Afghan people. In this context, Pakistan greatly values the recent presidential and provincial council elections held in Afghanistan. These elections show the commitment of the Afghan people to democracy and the rule of law. We have welcomed the outcomes of these elections. The Government and people of Pakistan remain committed to further cementing our close, fraternal and cooperative ties with the new Afghan Administration under President Hamid Karzai.

The cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan spans the entire spectrum of political, economic and cultural relations. There is continuous dialogue and regular exchange of visits at the highest levels. Early this year, our two countries signed the landmark Joint Declaration on Directions of Bilateral Cooperation, which has turned a new page in our bilateral relations. This Declaration is a road map for our bilateral relations leading to a bright and promising future. It is also a manifestation of the aspirations of our two peoples for a peaceful, prosperous and better tomorrow.

In May this year, Pakistan hosted the third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan. The event was attended by 24 countries and 18 regional and international organizations, institutions and bodies. The Conference crystallized a regional consensus on key transregional cooperation projects in the fields of mining, health, energy, infrastructure development, transit, trade, labour and human resource development. We are closely following up on these projects and hope that our efforts will prove to be a milestone in assisting Afghanistan in its developmental efforts. Despite our own financial constraints, we are participating significantly in Afghanistan's economic development and reconstruction. Our assistance package for Afghanistan is the biggest cooperation programme Pakistan has with any other country.

We are also looking forward to closely working with the new Afghan Government on key bilateral projects that have been identified earlier, including the rail link from Chaman to Kandahar, the Central Asia-South Asia Regional Energy Cooperation project or CASA 1000, the Hairatan-Mazar-e-Sharif rail link and establishment of a customs academy in Kabul.

We are also engaged in security and intelligence cooperation, including through the Tripartite Commission, which includes the United States and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). This cooperation is essential in order to cement our gains in the campaign against terrorism and extremism. We have made enormous sacrifices, more than any other country, in this campaign.

In order to interdict illegal cross-border movement, which is a joint responsibility, Pakistan has established 1,000 border posts. More than 100,000 troops are deployed on our side of the border with Afghanistan, at considerable cost. We rightfully expect

Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF to reciprocate with robust deployment and patrolling on their side, with a view to checking all illegal activities including terrorism, drug trafficking and commercial smuggling.

Afghan infants born in refugee camps in Pakistan during the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have now grown and become fathers. For the past three decades, Pakistan has housed over 3 million Afghan refugees and, despite isolated short spells of voluntary return, Pakistan still hosts nearly 2 million. Nobody should underestimate the resulting enormous social, economic and security costs already paid by the people of Pakistan and the outstanding challenges we still face.

The Tripartite Agreement of August 2007 between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees contains a framework on reintegration, and Pakistan remains committed to the voluntary, gradual, safe and dignified return of all Afghan refugees. However, we stress the need to strengthen reintegration programmes for refugees within Afghanistan's development strategy. Greater sustained and diligent efforts to create the necessary pull-factors in Afghanistan are needed so that refugees feel that they can return to their country with dignity and honour. We expect the United Nations and the international community to assist in this endeavour with all necessary resources.

The latest report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan (A/64/364) underscores that insecurity, driven by politically motivated insurgency and exploited by criminals and drug traffickers, is the greatest factor impeding progress in Afghanistan. The report notes the spread of this menace to the north-east and north-west of the country. The insurgency needs to be eliminated as a priority matter and without seeking to externalize the problem. This is a complex and interconnected challenge that requires a corresponding integrated, coherent and coordinated response. Its objective analysis and proper understanding is required to formulate an effective response.

The core of violence and conflict in Afghanistan emanates from terrorist groups, foreign militants such as Al-Qaida, and militant Taliban who are not prepared to reconcile and give up the path of violence. Their nexus with drug traders is increasingly discernable. These elements must be confronted head on. However, coercion needs to be supplemented by a comprehensive approach that addresses the political and economic

aspects in parallel. Although reliance on international support is vital, especially for development needs, such efforts must have strong ownership from the Afghan Government.

We agree with the conclusion drawn by the Secretary-General that the key to long-term stability in Afghanistan is capacity-building of the country's security institutions: the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police and the relevant ministries. Equally important is building the civilian institutions at both the central and subnational levels. Good governance and the rule of law are required to counter the problems of neglect, exclusion and interference, which are common causes of grievances.

We are happy to note the improvement in several economic and social indicators in Afghanistan. The report of the Secretary-General notes the increasing effectiveness of the Afghan Government in implementing its developmental agenda and seeking donor alignment in its agricultural initiatives. Most of these gains will be short-lived if they are not backed by a surge in investment in development programmes.

The world needs to recognize that most of the growth and innovation of the past few decades in the global corporate sector has eluded Afghanistan. As such, Afghanistan remains isolated from the global economy. It is therefore time to re-establish these linkages. To that end, the key would be the engagement of multinational corporations and large enterprises in project development in Afghanistan, particularly in mining, agriculture and infrastructure. The international community, particularly the developed countries, should leverage their potential behind such efforts. The economic and political dividends of such initiatives could be enormous not only for the people of Afghanistan, but for rest of the world as well.

Pakistan greatly values the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The United Nations has an important role to play in coordinating the comprehensive international effort in Afghanistan. Pakistan would welcome the enhancement of this role in the political and security fields. We strongly condemn terrorist attacks on United Nations and Afghan security personnel and reiterate our support for the Secretary-General in his endeavours to enhance security for United Nations personnel.

We take this opportunity to thank the delegation of Germany for leading the process of consultations on

the draft resolution (A/64/L.8). We believe that the text addresses all the relevant issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We are happy to co-sponsor the draft resolution and urge all Member States to adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Askarov (Uzbekistan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Republic of Uzbekistan in its capacity as the Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Unfortunately, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be defined by the aggravation and escalation of confrontation and the intensification of terrorist actions by militants. Confrontation in Afghanistan remains today one of the main sources of concern for the international community and a serious security threat to Central Asia.

Uzbekistan, as a close neighbour of Afghanistan, clearly recognizes that the achievement of peace and stability in that country is a key security factor and would open great possibilities for solving the critical problems of sustainable social and economic development of the whole Central Asian region.

There is deep concern about drug production and trafficking because, despite the decrease in narco-crops and some reduction in the volume of drug production, it is still too early to draw conclusions about possible success in this field. We need to take into consideration the fact that drug trafficking has become one of the major sources of financing for militants and the destabilization of the situation not only in Afghanistan, but also in neighbouring States.

The dynamics of the development of the situation in Afghanistan highlights the increasing evidence that the Afghan problem cannot be solved only by armed forces, using only military means, or by further militarization.

We acknowledge the measures undertaken by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In this context, it is important that resolution 1890 (2009), recently adopted by the Security Council, directs ISAF to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights law and for all appropriate measures to be taken to ensure the protection of civilians.

It is extremely important to fully respect the deep historical and ethno-demographic roots of the multi-ethnic people of Afghanistan and their traditional

and religious values. Special attention should be given to solving such acute problems such as the rehabilitation of the economy and social infrastructure in Afghanistan, destroyed by more than 30 years of war.

Uzbekistan is undertaking significant efforts to assist Afghanistan. Our country has built 11 bridges along the Mazari-Sharif-Kabul highway, which is crucial to ensuring unhampered communication between the North and South of the country. At the start of 2002, we restored Afghanistan's electrical supply and, in 2008, Uzbekistan completed the construction of the high-powered Khairaton-Puli-Khumri-Kabul electrical line, thanks to which the Afghan capital receives 100 per cent of the electricity it requires.

The problem of the development of transport infrastructure and its inclusion in international transport and communication projects requires very urgent attention. As members know, the only railway in Afghanistan goes through the Uzbek city of Termiz and ends in the city of Khairaton. The Asian Development Bank has prepared a project that stipulates the extension of the railway to the city of Mazari Sharif, and Uzbek companies are currently active on this project. This project seeks to integrate Afghanistan's transport infrastructure not only into the Central Asian and trans-Caucasian transport-communication systems, but also into the Navoi-Turkmenbashi-Baku-Kars route, allowing it to reach the markets of Europe and the Turkish seaport of Mersin, which would provide access to North Africa and the Middle East. The project's implementation would assist rapid development of mutual trade and increased investment activity in the region.

Uzbekistan believes that a peaceful settlement of the situation in Afghanistan is unachievable without bringing Afghans into the process. We are confident that, without promoting national reconciliation and consent and strengthening the State hierarchy, it would be impossible to significantly improve and radically change the situation in the country.

In this connection, forming effective international mechanisms of multilateral cooperation capable of consolidating stabilization efforts and involving neighbouring countries, all interested States and international organizations will be crucial in many ways to finding a solution to the acute problems of Afghanistan.

The settlement of the Afghan problem could be facilitated by the creation, under United Nations auspices, of a "6+3" contact group, with the participation of plenipotentiary representatives of Afghanistan's neighbouring States plus Russia, the United States and NATO. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, has repeatedly emphasized that the implementation of such an initiative involving neighbouring countries would allow for the achievement of an accord both in and around Afghanistan.

Important steps in this direction have already been undertaken by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It is particularly necessary to highlight the outcome of the special conference held under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Moscow on 27 March, as well as the cooperation between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Afghanistan, which is being carried out under the protocol signed by the organization and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the establishment of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group in 2005 in Beijing.

In this context, Uzbekistan supports the General Assembly's draft resolution on Afghanistan (A/64/L.8), prepared by a large group of sponsors. We expect that the adoption of this document by consensus will contribute to the consolidation of international efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statement on the situation in Afghanistan made during our debate by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few additional comments on this vital issue in my national capacity.

The annual debate on the situation in Afghanistan is the best opportunity to underline the role that the United Nations plays in the process of the stabilization and reconstruction of that country. Poland welcomes the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Germany (A/64/L.8). The coordinating role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the activities undertaken by Special Representative Kai Eide enjoy our full support and respect.

In that context, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan who were killed and injured during the recent terrorist attack against United Nations personnel in Kabul in October. I convey my sincere condolences to the families of the victims, the Secretary-General, United

Nations staff and the people and the Government of Afghanistan. My Government reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism and strongly condemns all acts of terror, especially those directed against those who work for the country's stability and security. I would like to underline my Government's full support for the Secretary-General's recent initiative to enhance the security of United Nations staff.

The year that has passed since our last debate on Afghanistan in this Hall has been one of significant efforts and important positive and negative developments in that country. Poland shares the assessment of the Secretary-General and endorses the recommendations contained in his most recent report on the situation in Afghanistan (A/64/364). We welcome the benchmarks and indicators of progress annexed to it, which can be a useful tool for measuring the progress achieved. We hope that this new instrument will contribute to better coordination and increase the effectiveness of our joint efforts.

We are closely following the process of presidential and provincial council elections, which are without a doubt important milestones in the processes of stabilization and State-building. Despite all the problems, the holding of elections in very difficult, complex and dangerous circumstances, the participation of young people, and public engagement in the election campaign provide us with grounds for cautious optimism. We deplore the numerous electoral irregularities and fraud, but at the same time we commend the Electoral Complaints Commission and the Independent Election Commission for their work in identifying, investigating and ruling on those frauds and irregularities. The time factor is critical. Poland looks forward to the rapid formation of a new Afghan Government based on a broad political platform, as well as the establishment of a new contract between the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Poland regrets the current increase in the number of violent incidents, compared to previous years. We note that the security situation in the southern and eastern parts of the country is still more complex and more difficult than in other regions. However, the decrease in security is visible throughout the country. In that regard, we deeply regret any civilian casualty. At the same time, it must be stressed, as the Secretary-General's report states, that the Taliban and other anti-Government elements are responsible for almost three quarters of civilian deaths. We fully agree with the

declaration made by General McChrystal that the protection of the Afghan population is the central and essential element of the international presence in Afghanistan.

Poland has been engaged in Afghanistan since March 2002. My country's involvement follows from our sense of responsibility for the situation in that country, which still poses a threat to international peace and security. We are fully aware that assuming the responsibility for the stabilization and reconstruction processes is not a short-term commitment. The 2008 decision to significantly strengthen the Polish involvement increased the number of our troops allocated to the International Security Assistance Force operation in Afghanistan to 1,600. The recent decision of the Government of Poland in April 2009 resulted in the current number of 2,000 military personnel, with an additional troop reserve of 200 deployable in an emergency. Moreover, since the autumn of 2008, Poland has taken over the responsibility for the security situation in Ghazni province.

Poland is gradually increasing its engagement in what we view as the crucial task of training the Afghan national security forces. My country has provided three operational military liaison teams to train the Afghan National Army and two international police mentoring teams to the Afghan National Police. Additionally, Poland has been present in the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan since its launch in 2007.

Apart from its military engagement, Poland has been reshaping its involvement in accordance with the concept of a comprehensive approach aimed at effective civil-military cooperation. That has resulted in complementing our military presence with civil elements. Since the summer of 2008, a Polish team of 30 civilian personnel has been working in the United States-led provincial reconstruction team in Ghazni.

Additionally, Poland has provided development aid to Afghanistan since 2002. In 2009, Poland contributed around \$12.5 million to the reconstruction goal in that country, which is five times higher than the amount assigned in 2008. The inclusion of Poland in the work of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board since July 2009 is perceived by my Government not only as recognition of our efforts in the field of development cooperation with Afghanistan, but also and primarily as reinforcing our commitment to further

supporting the process of the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The problems that we are faced with in Afghanistan are of major concern to all United Nations Member States. That common interest gives us grounds for optimism that the coordinated efforts of the whole international community will lead us to further progress in the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Let me begin by expressing our satisfaction with the draft resolution (A/64/L.8) that the General Assembly intends to adopt this morning. We would like to thank Germany for facilitating a consensus on it. We are happy to be co-sponsoring it. It is a balanced document that reflects the achievements and challenges in Afghanistan.

I would like to share Turkey's position on the situation in Afghanistan. That country is passing through a critical period. Turkey is hopeful for its future. The situation may be difficult, but we have to continue working to assist our Afghan brothers and sisters. The deliberate terrorist attacks on the United Nations mission during the recent electoral process should not deter us. It should only strengthen our determination to assist the Afghan people in establishing lasting peace and stability. Turkey condemns the 28 October terrorist attack against the United Nations in the strongest terms. We extend our condolences to the United Nations family and the families of the victims. We wish the wounded a quick recovery. We salute the courage of the United Nations and Afghan staff. We also share the grief of the Afghan people.

The continued strong presence of the United Nations is of utmost importance to success in Afghanistan. At this juncture, we must continue to support the Secretary-General by every means; first and foremost, we must address staff security.

Turkey trusts that the Afghan people will sooner or later achieve a peaceful and prosperous future. In that vein, the elections were an important milestone in the efforts to fight terrorism and secure stability in Afghanistan. The elections were crucial. Everybody knew that they would not be easy. The most important thing is that for the second time elections were held in that big country. Each election experience undoubtedly constitutes a further step towards strengthening democracy. Thanks to the courage and determination of the Afghan people, who faced difficult conditions, elections were held. Turkey congratulates President

Karzai on his re-election and hopes that the coming period will be better for the Afghan people.

Now that the elections are over, the new Administration should embrace the entire nation. Turkey hopes that the Administration will reach out to all ethnic groups in the country through inclusive policies and that all who competed against President Karzai in the election will offer their support to the new Administration. Following the election process, it is of great importance that Afghanistan refocus on national unity and reconstruction efforts as soon as possible.

Let me also briefly touch upon Turkish-Afghan relations. Our relations with Afghanistan are unique; they are based on deep historical and cultural bonds. Turkey is continuing its most comprehensive humanitarian operation. We are participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and took over the ISAF Kabul Command as of 1 November for a period of one year. On that occasion we nearly doubled our troop contribution. We also have a civilian-led provincial reconstruction team in Wardak.

Turkey continues to implement an intensive assistance programme for the peace and prosperity of the Afghan people and intends to further expand its humanitarian operations. Building the capacity of Afghanistan and strengthening national ownership in the civilian sector is a priority. Turkey will also continue its utmost efforts to provide support to the United Nations in Afghanistan. We will be the lead country in the Security Council on Afghanistan in 2010. We intend to build on the positive momentum created by Japan with the assistance of the United Nations and to contribute to stability in Afghanistan through the Security Council as well.

Turkey believes there is a long-term need for a comprehensive approach that includes security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and social and economic development. All of those issues are interlinked, and the following four areas therefore deserve special attention: comprehensive economic development with a visible impact on the people's living conditions; strong Afghan military and police forces to take the lead in and ownership of national security; inclusive national reconciliation in order to strengthen peace and stability in the country; and modern education and justice systems to effectively combat extremism of all sorts.

Regional cooperation is also a must for accomplishing our goals in Afghanistan. The international community should encourage and help regional cooperation. For our part, in April we hosted the third Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit in Turkey. For the first time, security and intelligence officials met, along with the Presidents of the three countries. We hosted the Friends of Democratic Pakistan Senior Officials meeting and the Foreign Ministerial Meeting on 24 and 25 August in Istanbul, followed by the Afghanistan-Pakistan Special Envoys meeting. We support a coordinated approach at the regional level and enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours. To that end, we will continue our regional efforts in order to contribute to stability in the region.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Turkey is confident that the country's stability as well as its social and political harmony will grow stronger in the coming period. Turkey will always stand by the friendly and brotherly Afghan people and fully trusts that they will surmount the difficulties confronting them in unity and solidarity. We must also strengthen the hopes and expectations of the Afghan people. Unless the international community wins the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, peace and stability will remain a distant objective.

Failure is not an option in Afghanistan. We must succeed; we are confident that we will.

Ms. AlRashoud (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his sincere and continued efforts to bring about success in Afghanistan. My delegation highly appreciates the pivotal role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), as well as that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan in leading and coordinating civilian efforts there.

The State of Kuwait denounces all acts of violence and suicide attacks in Afghanistan, and it firmly condemns the armed terrorist attack that took place at the end of last month against a United Nations guest, taking the lives of five United Nations employees, whose duties included assisting election teams and other field work that contributed to the maintenance of peace and security. It also denounces the increased targeting of United Nations missions,

since this has led to a growing number of victims among Afghan civilians, members of international assistance agencies and all those who work to deliver humanitarian assistance in the field.

The State of Kuwait welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General to continue United Nations efforts in support of Afghanistan, based on the moral duty to carry out desperately needed humanitarian work, while also reaffirming the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

The State of Kuwait welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1868 (2009) on 23 March, the 15 July statement of the President of the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan (S/PRST/2009/21), and all relevant international resolutions.

The State of Kuwait also conveys its congratulations to President Hâmid Karzai on his election for another term, and wishes him success in leading the country and in achieving stability, security and progress for Afghanistan, while affirming its sovereignty.

We also thank the representative of Germany for introducing draft resolution A/64/L.8 on the situation in Afghanistan, of which my country is sponsor. We stress the importance of the fundamental and impartial role performed by the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan and in leading the efforts of the international community.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security (A/64/364), there have been accomplishments and progress in some areas, such as demining, limiting opium cultivation and building and fostering the capacity of the national Afghan army and police forces. But, despite all of that, the rate of change in the living conditions of the Afghan people is still very slow and is a source of increasing despair for them. Furthermore, the strong ties between the drug trade and the terrorist activities of extremist groups pose a serious threat to security, the rule of law and the development of the country.

Therefore, the State of Kuwait appeals to all Member States, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to continue providing all possible assistance for Afghanistan in all humanitarian fields, in close cooperation and coordination with the

Government of Afghanistan and consistent with its national development strategies.

In this context, we refer to the contributions of the State of Kuwait to the reconstruction of infrastructure in Afghanistan. The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development provided a loan in the amount of \$30 million, in fulfilment of its pledge during the donors' conference held in the Japanese capital, Tokyo. This included \$15 million for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of the Kandahar-Spin Boldak road; the remaining \$15 million went to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Moreover, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society has over the past few years provided assistances in the amount of more than \$6.5 million. Also various Kuwaiti civil society and charitable organizations continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan.

In conclusion, it is our hope that the United Nations will continue in its endeavours to provide assistance to the Afghan Government, in order to consolidate peace and stability in Afghanistan, which will have a positive effect in the region and will enable the country to resume its natural role in the international community.

Mr. Normandin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/64/L.8, on the situation in Afghanistan. Once again this year, we warmly welcome the fact that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, thus reaffirming the collective commitment of all United Nations Member States to Afghanistan. The draft resolution expresses our hope and resolve that Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, will continue to make progress in achieving a better life for its people.

We are conscious of the challenges that Afghanistan and the international community face in achieving that progress. In this context, Canada offers its sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the latest attack on the United Nations in Kabul. We also offer our condolences to the families and friends of all Afghans as well as to those of the civilians and soldiers from many of the countries represented here today who have lost their lives in the fighting in Afghanistan. We condemn the insurgents' disregard for human life and for all the toil and sacrifice invested by so many to build a better future for Afghanistan. Canadians are saddened by the losses

of all those who mourn. Canada too has made sacrifices. Yet we will not falter in our commitment to help Afghans achieve peace and stability.

Despite the problems in Afghanistan, it is important to remember that progress has been made in certain respects. That can be seen in the advances in education and health care since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Furthermore, as noted in the Secretary-General's September report (A/64/364), Afghanistan has seen some real progress this year in the following areas. With the support of the International Security Assistance Force and the international community, the Afghan security forces are increasingly taking charge of their own security and protecting the Afghan people. Strong ministers in key positions have made important progress on issues such as policing, agriculture and rural development. Afghanistan has also seen a significant increase this year in its own revenue collection. At the same time, opium production has decreased in Afghanistan, and the economy is being boosted by increased efforts to buy locally.

(spoke in English)

Continued progress will require a renewed relationship of trust among President Karzai, the Afghan Government and Afghan citizens. While the elections in Afghanistan were not without challenges, Canada acknowledges the decision of the Independent Election Commission not to hold a second round and commends the Afghan people who made their voices heard.

Now, Canada, along with its international partners, looks to President Karzai and the new Government to turn their immediate attention to building the legitimacy of the Government at all levels. To do that, the needs of the Afghan people must be central to the setting of realistic objectives by the Afghan Government. Delivery on those objectives will require the appointment of effective and credible ministers and governors. We look to the Government of Afghanistan to undertake serious, credible and visible efforts to improve good governance, combat corruption and promote and protect human rights.

Our expectations of the Afghan Government are high, but we set these expectations while continuing our work to rebuild Afghanistan in a concerted effort with the Government of Afghanistan, the Afghan people and the international community.

Canada has successfully transformed its efforts in Afghanistan into a fully integrated civilian and military mission. We are supporting the delivery of measurable results in Kandahar, where our efforts are concentrated, but also throughout the country, as we contribute 50 per cent of our assistance to national programmes. Canada continues to make progress on our three signature projects: schools are being built, rehabilitation of the Dahla Dam is advancing and children are being vaccinated against polio in Kandahar and across the country.

In addition, our stabilization operation, which aims to increase security in Kandahar city and its populated approaches, has brought increased stability in the pilot project village of Deh-e-Bagh by clearing insurgent elements, initiating basic infrastructure projects and working with Afghan security forces to build long-term security in the village and its surrounding areas.

The tangible results of our efforts are encouraging. However, many important challenges still lie ahead. There is increased violence by an insurgency attempting to derail reconstruction efforts, progress is slow in many areas such as governance and rule of law and access by humanitarian workers to vulnerable populations has become increasingly constrained.

In the face of these challenges, we stand behind the United Nations as the voice of the international community in Afghanistan. We are heartened to see that the violence has not deterred the United Nations from its vital role in Afghanistan and we would like to pay special tribute to Special Representative Kai Eide and his team for their tireless efforts.

We call upon the international community to unite behind the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and give it the necessary tools to continue its work in Afghanistan, including UNAMA's important coordination and outreach role in the more difficult areas of the country.

In conclusion, while we need to continue to be realistic about the challenges we face in Afghanistan, we must maintain our collective resolve and continue to work with the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations and the rest of the international community to ensure a brighter and safer future for the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the progress made in Afghanistan since this

time last year, and in particular congratulates the people and the Government of Afghanistan on holding and participating in the first elections run wholly by Afghan authorities. While New Zealand was very concerned by the level of fraud of those elections, we welcome the respect shown by the parties for the electoral complaints process.

New Zealand believes that attention must now be focused on securing a safe and secure future for Afghanistan. To this end, we call on President Karzai to move swiftly to form a new, inclusive, credible and effective Government. We encourage him, with the support of the international community, including New Zealand, to build a renewed relationship with the people of Afghanistan by addressing deep-seated problems facing the country in security, governance, corruption, human rights, development, justice and narcotics. New Zealand also urges the new Government to ensure that the legislation that was enacted immediately before the election complies with its international human rights obligations, particularly those protecting women and children.

New Zealand strongly condemns the recent attack on United Nations staff in Kabul, and we express our sympathy to the victims and their families. New Zealand agrees with the Secretary-General on the importance of protecting United Nations personnel, who often work in trying and dangerous environments in their efforts to build a secure future for Afghanistan. And while we accept the need to relocate many personnel, we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment that the United Nations will not be deterred from its important role in Afghanistan.

The security situation, particularly in the South and East, continues seriously to hamper development by limiting the reach of the Afghan Government and humanitarian agencies and hindering their ability to improve the lives of the Afghan people. Afghan military and police capability must be strengthened to deal with the deteriorating security situation, and in this regard we welcome International Security Assistance Force commander General McChrystal's renewed focus on training and mentoring. Indeed, empowering Afghan forces to lead security efforts in Afghanistan is a key commitment for the international community, and New Zealand is doing its part to meet that commitment.

Although New Zealand faces other security challenges closer to home, the New Zealand Defence Force has led the provincial reconstruction team in Bamyan province for more than six years. The team is building the capacity of the Afghan National Police to take responsibility for security in the province. In addition, we recently deployed our special forces to Kabul to work alongside the Afghan Crisis Response Unit. That redeployment and our work on the Bamyan provincial reconstruction team demonstrate New Zealand's long-standing desire to promote the safety and security of the Afghan people.

In parallel, New Zealand is expanding its civilian assistance to Afghanistan, with a particular focus on agriculture in Bamyan. We are also continuing our support for rural livelihood programmes, education and health services and the capacity-building of provincial governmental, non-governmental and civil society organizations.

While we welcome the progress made in recent years, we believe that a continued, sustained commitment by the international community will remain necessary to help Afghanistan build a positive future. And New Zealand is committed to playing its part in securing that outcome for the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Khazae (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, Mr. Kai Eide, and all their colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for their firm commitment and valuable dedication to strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The central role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts in Afghanistan is of paramount importance and enjoys our full support. I would like here to salute the heroism and sacrifices of United Nations personnel in Afghanistan and extend my condolences to the United Nations family over the loss of the lives of United Nations personnel in the recent terrorist attack on the guest house on 28 October.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the recent presidential election held in Afghanistan and congratulates the people of Afghanistan on their active participation in that historic election and His Excellency Mr. Karzai upon his re-election.

We are pleased to see the progress achieved by our brotherly neighbour Afghanistan in all areas, in

particular in institution-building. As reiterated in the recent report of the Secretary-General (A/64/364), the Afghan State must be founded on solid institutions staffed with competent officials selected and promoted on the basis of merit. Much effort has gone into creating these institutions over the past eight years, yet some of that effort has been insufficient, despite the achievements made to date. But the deteriorating security situation has also significantly hampered attempts to build the governmental institutions and infrastructure necessary to the smooth running of the Government.

As in the past, we extend our full support and assistance to the people and Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to achieve security, stability and comprehensive and sustainable development. We call for the expeditious withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and the handing over of the control and management of Afghani affairs to the people and Government of Afghanistan.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains the biggest challenge. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and realities on the ground clearly indicates that there have been some accomplishments in strengthening security and stability in the country, but that increased terrorist attacks and violence in some parts of Afghanistan, coupled with the pervasive drug trade and the military operations by foreign forces, are yet other concerns preoccupying the people of Afghanistan and international public opinion.

Along with security concerns, the continuing poppy cultivation, production of narcotics, drug trafficking and the humanitarian crisis, among other issues, remain to be effectively tackled and continue to endanger Afghanistan's stability and development, as well as that of the region and beyond.

The recent rise of insecurity in Afghanistan indicates clearly that the attempts made in the name of national reconciliation by some of the Powers present in Afghanistan to appease some extremist and terrorist groups have been shown to be counterproductive and have only emboldened such groups. We are of the view that peace and stability are achievable only by making the people of Afghanistan see the results of the help and support of the international community in their daily life through the reconstruction of infrastructure, capacity-building, training, education and the development of important sectors such as agriculture, among others.

Furthermore, we believe that the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, who have undergone many hardships and much suffering in recent decades, cannot be won by relying on military operations. Instead of dispatching more troops to the country, we should strengthen the Afghan National Army and National Police expeditiously to enable them to take charge of security in Afghanistan.

Despite a small drop in narcotic drug cultivation and production in some provinces, Afghanistan remains, according to the recent assessment report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the world's biggest producer of narcotic drugs. The continuing cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotics is adversely affecting security there. Combating this menace unquestionably demands a long-term, multifaceted strategy. The magnitude of the threat requires more resolute and coordinated efforts by Afghanistan and the international community. For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort in combating this threat, and we have made many sacrifices in this regard. While our determination to continue this fight is unwavering, we expect the international community to get more seriously involved in the quest to save people across the globe from the destructive effects of this menace.

Despite all these concerns and uncertainties, however, one thing is clear — the Government and people of Afghanistan continue to demonstrate their steadfast resolve not to bow to the difficulties they are facing, but to surmount them and work for a stable, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. In this regard, they need the support of every one of us in the international community. The forthcoming conference on Afghanistan will provide us with another opportunity to reassure the Afghans that as they continue on their journey towards stability, security and development, the international community stands with them, offering its help and support.

Iran, along with other neighbouring countries and the world at large, has a vital interest in a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbours. In recent years, we have participated in projects aimed at rebuilding and reconstructing the country, focusing mainly on infrastructure and capacity-building. So far, the Islamic Republic of Iran's official assistance to Afghanistan amounts to about \$500 million for those projects. In the area of regional cooperation, we have also held

trilateral meetings at various levels with Afghanistan and Pakistan to foster cooperation in the economic and development sectors. Within that context, after several rounds of expert consultations, the heads of State of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran met in Tehran in May.

We have also extended our hospitality to more than 3 million Afghan nationals over the past three decades. At present, close to 1 million Afghan refugees are registered in Iran, while a similar number of unregistered Afghans are also living in our country. For all these years, Afghan nationals have continued to enjoy Iran's educational and welfare facilities and to benefit from the same subsidies that our own people receive.

Let me conclude by expressing our hope for a better and more prosperous future for Afghanistan and a commitment to help its people build a better world and a better future.

Mr. Cornado (Italy): Italy welcomes and supports today's draft resolution (A/64/L.8) on the situation in Afghanistan and looks forward to its adoption by consensus. That will confirm the strong ongoing commitment of all United Nations Member States to assisting Afghanistan on its path to peace, stability, democracy and reconstruction. And we thank Germany for its leadership in the negotiations that enabled the achievement of this important result.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union and joins previous speakers in welcoming the conclusion of the first elections run entirely by the Afghan authorities, with the support of the international community. We congratulate the people of Afghanistan and President Hamid Karzai on his election, and applaud the other presidential candidates for a campaign that addressed key issues and challenges for Afghanistan and its people. We also welcome the efforts of the Afghan electoral institutions to address irregularities in accordance with Afghan election laws and the Afghan Constitution. In this process, important lessons have been learned and need to be remembered, in view of the forthcoming elections in 2010.

As the Group of Eight foreign ministers stated on 3 November, the conclusion of this process gives Afghanistan a new opportunity for peaceful, effective and productive cooperation among all the political and

social components of its society. It also paves the way for a new season of collaboration between the Afghan authorities and the international community, under United Nations leadership. Strengthening regional cooperation, particularly among countries crucial to the stability of the region, will also play a key role in promoting security and development in Afghanistan.

For the sake of national unity, we encourage President Karzai to rapidly form an effective, qualified and credible Government. The biggest challenges facing the new executive are improving State and local governance, fighting corruption, promoting the rule of law, justice and human rights, as well as increasing accountability and achieving progress on reintegration, security and stability.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries, Italy confirms its resolute support for the people and leadership of Afghanistan in their fight against terrorism and the cultivation and production of narcotic drugs, in promoting good governance, and in tackling acute socio-economic problems. We remain unwaveringly committed to strengthening the ownership and responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan, to the ultimate benefit of the Afghan people. Italy looks forward to participating in the inauguration of President Karzai and, upon the installation of his Government, to stepping up its dialogue with the Afghan authorities.

Mr. Das (India): I would like to begin by expressing India's appreciation for the convening of this discussion on a subject of great importance for us, our region and the world. I commend the effort by the delegation of Germany in coordinating intergovernmental negotiations that have led us to this annual General Assembly resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. As we have been doing for the last several years, we are happy to be a sponsor of this resolution, which is traditionally adopted by consensus.

The successful conclusion of the first Afghan-led presidential and provincial council elections is a major milestone in Afghanistan's evolution as a democracy. We congratulate President Hamid Karzai on his re-election and express our appreciation to all democratic forces in Afghanistan. I would be remiss if I did not place on record our appreciation for the critical supportive role played by the United Nations and the international community towards organizing those elections. India appreciates the resolve and

determination of the Afghan people who participated in this historic election process, notwithstanding threats and intimidation by the Taliban.

Once a new Government assumes office, a fresh opportunity will be provided for a renewed commitment by the international community to rebuild Afghanistan. While determining the contours of a new Afghanistan compact, we need to assimilate and integrate the experiences drawn from the past compacts, such as the ones agreed to in London in January 2006 and in Paris in June 2008. Those agreements placed the responsibility for institution-building and governance mainly on the shoulders of the Afghan people and Government, without adequately funding that effort and eliminating the growing threat from terrorist groups destabilizing the country. This time we need to be mindful of those aspects.

In the arduous journey towards lasting peace and security in Afghanistan, significant challenges lie ahead. First and foremost is the imperative need for security. The challenge from a resurgent Taliban and Al-Qaida is real, and it is one that threatens us all. Asymmetric warfare and complex terrorist attacks are being mounted in Afghanistan and the wellsprings that sustain such terror show no signs of being drained. Civilians, humanitarian personnel, international workers, including United Nations staff and diplomatic personnel, as well as our own mission in Kabul, have been targeted in terrorist attacks.

There is increasing recognition that the surge in terrorist actions in Afghanistan is linked to the support and sanctuaries available in the contiguous areas. That explains the particularly high level of violence in the border areas of Afghanistan. Security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to root out the elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other terrorist and extremist groups operating within and outside Afghanistan's borders.

Therefore, in addition to the strengthening of the International Security Assistance Force, it is crucial that the Afghan national security forces be enlarged and developed in a professional manner and at a much faster pace, while being provided appropriate resources, combat equipment and training. We welcome the expansion of their capacities, as this is the only viable guarantee for a successful conclusion to the military engagement in Afghanistan. We note with appreciation

the efforts being made by third countries to strengthen the capacities of the Afghan national security forces.

Indeed, there are no quick-fix solutions. In the battle for winning the hearts and minds of ordinary Afghans, we need to guard against the risk of pessimism and defeatism pervading our thought processes. Perseverance and tenacity are critical to handle the challenge posed by Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other terrorist and extremist groups squarely and effectively.

This brings us to reconciliation. It requires strategic clarity, unity of purpose and due recognition of the nature of those with whom we seek to reconcile. Without consensus among relevant parties over key issues, such as with whom to reconcile and how, we may well be dividing ourselves, not those we seek to peel away from terrorist groups. It is for this reason that we must go beyond unworkable divisions between so-called good and bad Taliban. Terrorism cannot be compartmentalized. History suggests that facile attempts to strike Faustian bargains with terrorists often result in such forces turning on the very Powers that sustained them in the past. Any effort which weakens the authority of the central Government and its institutions would be counterproductive. We need to be extremely cautious while moving forward on this sensitive issue.

We support the Afghan Government's determination to integrate those willing to abjure violence and live and work within the parameters of the Afghan Constitution, which provides the framework for a pluralistic and democratic society. This should, of course, go hand-in-hand with actions to shut down the support and sanctuaries provided to terrorist groups across the border.

A sustainable strategy for stabilization of Afghanistan must be predicated upon short-, medium- and long-term strategies to address the development challenge. While the Afghan Government should spell out its priorities, the international community should come forward to provide the resources for fulfilling them. The efforts of the international community in Afghanistan can only be sustained in the long term if we invest in developing Afghan human resources. For this, a multipronged approach is required. At one level, we must invest in rebuilding the economic and social infrastructure of the nation, while generating jobs. At another, we must progressively transfer skills and

authority to our Afghan friends, to enable them to take full ownership of the reconstruction of their country.

In India's efforts towards stabilization of Afghanistan, the focus has been on development. Stabilizing Afghanistan is not only integrally connected with our own security, it is also connected to the civilizational legacy of our friendship. Our commitment to Afghanistan has now cost \$1.2 billion. It includes the widest range of activities, from a cold storage plant in Kandahar to the 218-kilometre-long Zaranj-Delaram highway to a power transmission line to Kabul, which has provided a round-the-clock electricity supply for the first time since 1992. We are constructing the Afghanistan Parliament building — the edifice of democracy — while simultaneously targeting community-based local projects that provide immediate peace dividends, such as schools and hospitals. In all of this, capacity-building is a core element. It is in support of this core task that India has expanded, by 35 per cent, the current allocation of 1,000 seats in our institutions for capacity-building and scholarship programmes.

Turning to the regional aspect, the stabilization of Afghanistan must be a central part of regional processes, if the country is to regain its role as the crossroads of South, West and Central Asia. This includes regional economic processes, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan. Those processes benefit the entire region, while hindering them affects Afghanistan and the region as well. We must expand, rather than hinder trade, transit and transport ties, including overland transit and trade. That is the best way of bringing the regional dimension into play in a positive manner.

Given the turbulence of the past eight years and the recent dramatic decline in security, there is need for an intensified focus on security, governance and development on the part of the Afghan Government, and here the international community should do what it can to assist. Failure to stabilize Afghanistan will entail a heavy cost for both the Afghan people and the world at large.

When we speak of recommitting ourselves to helping Afghanistan defeat the forces that seek to destroy all that has been achieved since 2001, it is important to recognize that all of us have an abiding interest in the success of this endeavour. We believe Afghanistan needs a long-term commitment from us,

even while we remain mindful of the challenges. The Afghan people have displayed resilience and a survival instinct, even against the greatest odds. We must do our utmost to support them.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join other Member States in sponsoring the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan contained in document A/64/L.8.

The draft resolution recognizes the progress that the Afghan people have made in rebuilding their country, but it acknowledges that far more work has yet to be done. We recognize the Afghan Government and security forces for their continuing efforts to address challenges in security, governance, human rights and the rule of law.

We also thank the Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and other United Nations personnel and the forces participating in the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom for their shared commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

The draft resolution highlights the challenges posed by those who seek to disrupt Afghan efforts to build a prosperous and stable country. Violent attacks by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremists and criminal groups undermine efforts to bring stability, security and a representative Government to Afghanistan and the draft resolution rightly denounces them.

The brutal attack on 28 October on the guest house in Kabul demonstrated tragically once more the need to stand firm against violent efforts to undermine the peace and stability that the Afghan people are working so hard to establish. Afghanistan has now reached the conclusion to its presidential election process. We congratulate President Karzai on his victory and we congratulate all the candidates who stood in Afghanistan's second presidential election, in particular, Mr. Abdullah.

This first-ever Afghan-led election was held under challenging circumstances, but the result was in line with Afghanistan's laws and its Constitution. As we move beyond the election, the credibility and success of the new President and his Government will rest on its ability to deliver better security, governance, justice and economic progress to the Afghan people. We stand ready to support the new Government in that

regard and we call on all Member States to redouble their efforts to work with the new Afghan Government to promote stability and prosperity for the Afghan people, along with peace and security for the region.

Mr. Korček (Slovakia): First of all, I would like to express my full support and associate Slovakia with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to underline several important issues in my national capacity.

We welcome the draft resolution on Afghanistan contained in document A/64/L.8, and we appreciate the efforts of Germany to facilitate a message of support from the international community to the Afghan people, who hope for a safe, stable, prosperous and democratic country. We are proud to be sponsors of the draft resolution.

Slovakia advocates massive engagement on the part of the international community in Afghanistan. The main objective of our common endeavour should be to help the new Afghan Government to become ready for taking full responsibility for the country, as far as security, stability, rule of law and development are concerned.

International forces are playing a crucial role in helping to bring about a stable and secure Afghanistan. I would like to pay tribute to all of the women and men of all nationalities, members of United Nations staff and many Afghans, who have lost their lives fighting for a better, fear-free and prosperous future for Afghanistan.

I would like to take this opportunity to again convey the condolences of my Government to the families of the most recent victims of violent extremism. We strongly condemn all subversive acts by the Taliban and Al-Qaida, especially those aimed at civilians and international civil personnel.

Slovakia is fully aware of its share of the responsibility for the situation in Afghanistan. That is why we have significantly increased our engagement in the military and civilian fields. Despite the economic crisis, we are fulfilling our commitments and we remain fully involved in the International Security Assistance Force operation.

Only five months ago, the Government of the Slovak Republic and the National Council of the Slovak Republic extended a mandate to 262 Slovak

military personnel in the country and recently we announced at the defence ministers meeting in Bratislava that my country is considering increasing the number of our troops, as well as doing more in the construction field.

Slovakia is also involved in the training of the Afghan National Army and in preparing the full engagement of the Afghan National Police force by providing our own police personnel to the European Police Office mission.

Security is the main precondition for further development of the country. However, we cannot wait until the country is secure to address the humanitarian situation.

Durable peace and stability in Afghanistan can be achieved only when adequate measures to promote the socio-economic construction of the country have been adopted. It is crucial to improve the effectiveness of our joint efforts so that the greatest number of Afghans can enjoy a positive impact on their lives as soon as possible.

Since 2003, Afghanistan has been a high priority country for Slovak development assistance. In 2009, Afghanistan was upgraded to a programme country under the new Slovak 2009-2013 medium-term strategy for development cooperation. Our goal is to allocate nearly €1 million to Afghanistan assistance in the upcoming period.

Slovakia directs its development assistance in Afghanistan in line with its sectoral priorities — developing democratic institutions, civil society and peace; social development; support for health care and education; and developing the economic and market environment and infrastructure. In 2009, six bilateral development projects prepared by Slovak organizations totalled €850,000.

Afghanistan is one of the four countries in the world with the lowest success rates in the fight against polio. This year, the Government of Slovakia has funded the distribution of polio vaccine to 250,000 children in Afghanistan, in cooperation with UNICEF. In September, we delivered humanitarian assistance in the form of tents and blankets for people in the province of Uruzgan who had been affected by natural disasters.

Afghanistan must remain at the top of our agenda over the long term. We are committed to our common

objective to help to improve the everyday lives of people in the country. Let me express my sincere hope that the international community, led by the United Nations, will step up its multilateral efforts to provide assistance to the Afghan Government with a view to consolidating peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): My delegation looks forward to the adoption by the General Assembly of draft resolution A/64/L.8, on the situation in Afghanistan. This draft resolution is the result of a constructive and active negotiation among Member States, which, I believe, represents the political will of all Member States and which supports the Afghan people in their political and national reconstruction process. In this vein, the Republic of Korea joined in sponsoring this draft resolution in order to add its own political will to the international collaboration in support of the Afghan people. My delegation also expresses its appreciation to the German delegation for drafting and facilitating this draft resolution.

For the last couple of months, we have witnessed an intense political evolution in Afghanistan. We were at times encouraged by progress and at times disappointed by setbacks. Most of all, we were deeply saddened and disheartened by the terrorist attack on 28 October. However, at the same time, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, we were more than resolved not to be deterred, and we remain determined to continue the work of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

My delegation admires the courage and determination of the Afghan people in participating in the electoral process and exercising their constitutional rights in one of the most difficult and threatening of environments. The Electoral Complaints Commission and the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) deserve our respect in upholding the constitutional process. The experience and the lessons learned during the elections will lay a valuable and solid foundation for the future process of democratization and national restoration of Afghanistan. In this regard, my Government welcomes the decision of the IEC to declare Mr. Hâmid Karzai the newly elected President of Afghanistan and congratulates President Karzai on his election.

We believe that the United Nations and the international community are ready to support and

cooperate with the new Afghan Government. We also believe that international engagement is crucial to rebuilding Afghanistan's stability and national capacity. To earn trust and confidence and establish a credible partnership with the international community, President Karzai should reach out to Afghan political leaders and ethnic groups to expedite the national reconciliation process and ensure good governance, including bold and determined measures to eradicate corruptive practices.

The Korean Government has been contributing to international efforts to support the national reconstruction process of the Afghan people, and we are ready to continue to work with President Karzai and his new Government. As was announced last month, the Korean Government will launch a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan in addition to the existing Korean medical support and vocational training team in Bagram, Afghanistan. This decision was made at the request of the Afghan Government and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Through this reconstruction team and other channels, the Korean Government will continue its support and cooperation with the people and the Government of Afghanistan.

Lastly, my delegation would like once again to express our deepest condolences to the victims and their families for their tragic losses in the vicious terrorist attacks on 28 October. This cowardly attack targeting unarmed civilians and workers of international organizations should not be condoned under any circumstances. My delegation strongly urges the Afghan Government to take all necessary measures to secure the safety and security of civilian workers in the country. We also stand determined to support the initiatives of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, including the taking of necessary budgetary measures, to strengthen security for all United Nations staff in Afghanistan.

Mr. Gebreel (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report (A/64/364). We commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for its remarkable work in that country. We wish to express our regret with regard to the incident that led to the death of United Nations staff on 28 October and present our condolences to our colleagues and to family members.

Since 2005, we have continued to receive reports of the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan. Today's report again shows a rise in loss of life and a deterioration in the security situation. That is a source of concern for us, particularly when we see deaths among civilians caused by attacks by armed groups as well as by air attacks by the international forces in Afghanistan. We are extremely concerned about the number of civilian victims — especially because of the actions of the international forces — despite calls by international and local forces for caution in the exercise of their missions. We urge all measures to be taken to ensure the safety of civilians, as well as full respect for international law and human rights law.

Another source of concern is mentioned in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report: "Efforts undertaken over the past several years to increase the number of national and international security forces have failed to stem the insurgency". This leads us to recognize the reality that a solution does not depend on the number of troops or their equipment, but on a comprehensive policy based on national reconciliation and development. In this context, we agree with the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 8 of the report concerning the need, noted by some political leaders of the country, to establish a ceasefire with the Taliban as a first step towards ensuring the stability of Afghanistan.

The ultimate goal of the international community is to assist the Afghan people in building a democratic, prosperous and stable State. The objective of the international community is not the defeat of the Taliban or others per se. The use of force alone will not restore security and stability if it is not accompanied by a dialogue leading to national reconciliation incorporating all components of the Afghan people, and if we do not fight corruption and drug trafficking. The international community must therefore undertake programmes to ensure that Afghanistan can assume its full responsibilities as a sovereign country capable of providing security and a dignified life for all Afghans and conditions conducive to the withdrawal of international troops, which is essential for national reconciliation.

According to the report of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative has visited a number of detention centres, including that at Bagram, which is run by international forces. But the report does not

evaluate these installations or say whether or not they are run in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. We therefore call upon the parties running these centres, be they the Afghan authorities or international forces, to respect the rules and norms of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to ensure that detainees receive fair trials and are allowed contact with the outside world and specialized international organizations, such as the International Committee for Human Rights.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): When the General Assembly met last year to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, many if not all of us underlined the significance of the August presidential elections for Afghanistan and the need for the United Nations to work with the Afghan authorities to ensure that they were credible, inclusive and secure. The fact that those elections went ahead in what were very challenging circumstances is an achievement in itself. We welcome the United Nations support for the elections. There were problems but they were addressed, and it was right that we saw the process through.

We must remember that these were the first Afghan-led elections in over 30 years. There was a genuine dialogue and debate about the future of the country on a wide-ranging set of issues during the elections. Candidates campaigned vigorously and millions of Afghans turned out to vote, which would never have happened under Taliban rule.

Though the elections were Afghan-led, the United Nations played a crucial role in facilitating and monitoring the process. From the early planning stages right up to the process's conclusion in recent days, the United Nations has provided admirable political leadership, resource coordination and technical expertise.

I wish to reiterate the United Kingdom's continued support to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA does vital work in incredibly difficult circumstances, particularly following the terrible attack in Kabul on 28 October. Over the past 10 days, the Secretary-General and his Special Representative have shown impressive resolve and determination to stay the course in Afghanistan.

In the light of the attack on 28 October, we agree that the United Nations must look to improve security. We stand ready to engage on how best this can be achieved. We all want to look carefully at existing

proposals that form part of the wider uplift package to see whether they can meet UNAMA's security needs or whether they need to be adapted.

Despite the many challenges Afghanistan faces, it is heartening to be able to note the continuing positive trend in counter-narcotics. Following a 19 per cent decrease in 2008, opium cultivation looks set to fall by a further 22 per cent this year. In Helmand, close work with the Afghan authorities has resulted in a decrease in cultivation of one third, and the operations conducted this year under trilateral initiative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provide grounds for cautious optimism at the regional level as well.

I should like to touch briefly on the issue of civilian casualties. The United Kingdom position remains as set out in previous discussions. We deeply regret — deeply regret — any civilian casualty. Each and every innocent life lost is a tragedy. As General McChrystal has made clear, protecting the Afghan population is at the core of our international mission, in stark contrast to the Taliban and their fellow insurgents who, as the Secretary-General's recent report (A/64/364) makes clear, continue to be responsible for the vast majority of civilian deaths.

Afghanistan now needs to work to tackle the significant challenges it faces. Following the clear and authoritative announcement by the Independent Election Commission on 2 November, my Prime Minister spoke to President Karzai on 2 November to congratulate him. My Prime Minister told Mr. Karzai that we now look to him to take forward a programme that represents the interests of all Afghans. President Karzai, at his press conference on 3 November, made clear that he is ready to make progress and take firm action to tackle, among other things, corruption.

The top priority for the international community shall now be to drive forward the process of Afghanization by working with the new Afghan Government to build up its security forces, make progress on reconciliation, improve local governance, deliver services for all Afghans, continue to expand the economy, tackle corruption and build constructive relations with its neighbours. We urge the international community to seize this debate in the General Assembly as an important opportunity to reaffirm our shared commitment to Afghanistan's young democracy and to its stability and security.

I emphasize our shared commitment. What we are all doing together in Afghanistan is vital not only to the people of Afghanistan, but also to the international community as a whole. As my Prime Minister said in a speech on Friday, we will succeed or fail together, and we must succeed.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Indonesia is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/64/L.8 on the situation in Afghanistan introduced by the representative of Germany. The draft reflects the crucial aspect of the support and cooperation of the international community. Only through an effective and well-coordinated discharging of commitments under the various international, regional and bilateral agreements can we ensure that the Government of Afghanistan is supported fully in executing its national strategies.

In only a few years, Afghanistan has achieved notable progress in various sectors. Both the national authorities and civilians are to be commended for their work in the extremely arduous circumstances. Yet now, what Afghanistan has accomplished is being continuously eroded by serious challenges to its security and stability. Fear of sliding back into a conflict situation is increasing as the activities of militants escalate. The series of recent bomb attacks reflects the urgent need to address those security challenges. In that regard, we condemn the recent wanton killings of United Nations staff members in Kabul. The courageous United Nations staff and other assistance partners provide help at great personal risk and deserve the full support of the international community.

We attach primary importance to increasing the capacity of the Afghan security forces to address the security challenges. We are mindful of the strong wishes of the Afghan people and Government to empower and strengthen their capacity in various sectors, including ensuring the security and stability of the country. National ownership is indeed critical. Sustained consultation and coordination with the Afghan authorities on the implementation of international assistance is therefore of paramount importance.

Military measures indeed remain crucial in responding to security challenges and the increasing attacks of militants. The role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been central in assisting the Afghan Government to tackle such challenges. We also acknowledge the complex

situations faced by ISAF in the execution of its tasks. However, the military is not the only instrument necessary to achieve peace and stability. As the militants continue to rely on asymmetric attacks, it is becoming obvious that other steps will be needed in addition to full-scale military responses. The situation in Afghanistan must be dealt with through a strategy that incorporates not only security sectors, but also the promotion of governance and the rule of law, as well as socio-economic development.

An Afghan-led reconciliation process will continue to be needed in order to achieve sustained peace. The elements among insurgents that renounce violence, respect justice, equality, freedom and tolerance and declare loyalty to Afghanistan's constitution should continue to be engaged politically in the reconciliation process. Addressing the narco-economy is also an urgent matter as it is closely linked to sustaining the insurgency. The continuing effort should be sustained and intensified. The progress achieved in reducing opium cultivation needs to be consolidated.

Indeed, there will be high expectations of the new Government of Afghanistan. The new Government will have an opportunity not only to shape a new agenda for cooperation, but also to improve governance and services in the socio-economic field for its people. In spite of the fact that the capacities of the authorities are still limited and there is the danger of insurgent violence, it is crucial that the new Government deliver positive changes to the daily life of its people. A key ingredient to a successful outcome, needless to say, is national ownership. Each and every Afghan has to embrace a new Afghanistan. The participation of all Afghan people in the political, social and economic processes is imperative.

Partnerships between Afghanistan and neighbouring States in addressing security challenges and in finding mutually acceptable solutions to humanitarian problems will remain key to sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan. In that regard, we welcome the commitment of Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours to contribute to regional security and prosperity.

Finally, with regard to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, my delegation believes that the Mission will remain pertinent in assisting the country in tackling the various challenges to its security and development. We welcome the

expansion of its presence to additional regions of the country and the increase of its capabilities and resources. Such an expansion will hopefully contribute to bringing about a political surge towards an early establishment of peace and stability in the country.

In closing, allow me to reiterate Indonesia's wish for Afghanistan to be a peaceful, democratic and prosperous country. We also reaffirm our full support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): Australia welcomes this opportunity to endorse and to be a sponsor of the General Assembly's draft resolution on Afghanistan (A/64/L.8) and to reaffirm our commitment to international efforts to build a more stable and more secure Afghan State.

We would like first to take this opportunity to record Australia's deep sorrow over the deaths of the United Nations workers so callously murdered by the Taliban on 28 October in Kabul. I suspect that there are very few of us here who do not personally know someone who either has served or is serving in Afghanistan. We support all efforts to meet the security needs of United Nations staff in Afghanistan, while at the same time enabling the United Nations to continue to play its indispensable role throughout the country.

Our collective task remains both difficult and urgent, as developments in Afghanistan over the last year, including a worsening of the security situation in many parts of the country, have shown. The coming year or two will be critical to the success of efforts by Afghans, and the international community supporting them, to meet the pressing challenges facing Afghanistan. Achieving that will require commitment to a focused agenda for action that is capable of delivering real improvements in the priority areas of security, governance and economic development.

Today, Afghanistan stands at an important juncture. The difficulties that accompanied the presidential election are well known, although it is important to note, as many speakers today have done, that the outcome respected the constitution and the Afghan-led electoral process. Looking forward, the task before President Karzai is to form a Government that can win the trust of the Afghan people by strengthening Afghanistan's security, fighting corruption and delivering effective Government services. Through our ongoing commitment in Afghanistan, Australia

stands ready to work with the new Afghan Government and other international partners in support of those objectives.

There has been a growing recognition that the challenges facing the coalition in Afghanistan demand a comprehensive approach that builds strong connections between the military and civilian spheres and views them as complementary parts of a single endeavour. Winning support for our mission among the Afghan people will depend as much on our success in helping the Afghan authorities deliver better services and clean government as on our achievements on the battlefield. That is reflected in Australia's approach to Afghanistan, which stresses the importance of a comprehensive capacity-building and development assistance effort, in addition to a substantial military and combat commitment.

On the military front, Australia announced in April a substantial increase in the number of our troops from 1,100 to around 1,550. The principal aim of that increased contribution was to bolster our efforts in training Afghan forces in the southern province of Oruzgan in order to get them to the point where they themselves can take responsibility for providing security in the province. Thus, we committed additional troops to form two further operational mentor and liaison teams in Oruzgan, in addition to the team that we already had in place. Australia also undertook to provide additional logistic support forces and force protection elements in Oruzgan, extra embedded planning and staff officers and some 120 troops to assist with security for the elections and general security in the province.

Australia is also providing \$200 million over the next five years to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund. Contributing to the Trust Fund supports the Australian Government's objective of creating a self-sufficient Afghan national army, capable of providing security for the Afghan nation. Further, we are deploying extra Australian Federal Police officers to train and advise members of the Afghan National Police force. The Australian Federal Police are providing training to the Afghan National Police at Oruzgan's Provincial Training Centre and also contributes through its role in counter-narcotics, combating serious organized crime, providing strategic advice to the Interior Ministry and working with international partners. It has also helped to develop national Afghan police investigation teams and

contributed to the establishment of strategic police programmes.

In addition to its work on the security front, Australia has also made a substantial contribution to the equally important civilian assistance effort. Since 2001, Australia has committed \$600 million to aid, capacity-building and reconstruction, including a pledge of \$250 million in June 2008 for development and reconstruction assistance over three years.

Through the efforts of the Australian Defence Force's Reconstruction Task Force and of advisers from the Australian Agency for International Development, Australia has already completed a range of important development projects, including in Oruzgan province, such as upgrades to hospitals and health clinics and the construction of bridges. Australian aid has contributed to Afghan Government efforts to build over 800 schools and provide basic health services to approximately 80 per cent of the population.

We are increasing Australia's aid efforts to support capacity-building and service delivery. We will provide up to six technical specialists, who will provide advice to key service delivery agencies including the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture and Rural Reconstruction and Development.

One of our principal objectives on the civilian front is to help pave the way for a more effective, credible and durable system of Government, extending from the capital of Kabul all the way down to the district level. What Afghanistan desperately needs is a system of national Government that is both trusted by its people and capable of delivering much-needed services throughout the country. Without it, the risk is that disillusioned Afghans will increasingly look to the Taliban and other destructive forces, rather than to the legitimate Government, to meet their needs.

With this in mind, Australia is helping to build the capacity of the Afghan Government at both the central and the provincial levels so it can deliver better services to its people. By contributing \$87 million to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, Australia has supported significant improvements in the Afghan Government's public financial management practices. This support is helping the Government to produce transparent budgets and to ensure public funds are being used for their intended purpose. It is also being used to establish an external monitoring agency to

oversee donor contributions to the Afghan Government's budget and to strengthen the procurement and audit functions of the Afghan Ministry of Finance.

As part of our contribution to the Trust Fund, we are also supporting the National Solidarity Programme. Run by the Afghan Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, the programme is aimed at providing small-scale, community-implemented infrastructure projects and at expanding the economic opportunities of the Afghan people. That has already reached 22,000 villages, or 68 per cent of the rural population, through delivery of more than 44,000 infrastructure projects, such as irrigation systems, safe drinking water and health clinics, to those rural communities.

Australia's efforts in Afghanistan are, of course, only part of a broader campaign by the international community to build a better future for the Afghan people. As the international community scales up its efforts in Afghanistan, effective donor coordination mechanisms will become even more important, if we are to ensure transparency and the effective distribution of resources.

In such a complex environment, the organizational role played by the United Nations in Afghanistan is becoming ever more important and challenging and we would like to note our appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Kai Eide, and also the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan personnel he leads.

Australia supports the draft resolution and we thank the delegation of Germany and its efforts in making it happen. We welcome, in particular, the draft resolution's call for reform of the country's public administration in order to ensure good governance and accountability at both the national and the subnational levels. Likewise, we welcome its interest in seeing further progress on the part of the Government in establishing a more effective, accountable and transparent administration to lead the fight against corruption, and its call for improved service delivery in key sectors such as energy and water supply.

Mr. Thiebaud (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and we would like to say how much we appreciate the German delegation's draft resolution contained in document A/64/L.8, of which we are a sponsor.

May I associate France with those delegations that have expressed their sincerest condolences to the families and the loved ones of the victims of the recent attack on the United Nations facility in Kabul on 28 October.

We also would like to express our sympathy to the families of all the civilian and military personnel who were killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan, as well as to the Afghan people, who have been sorely tested.

The electoral process has just concluded. We now need to turn towards the future. A new Government will soon take office. It will need to meet the specific expectations of the Afghan people in terms of progress in their daily lives as well as in terms of good governance. To do this, President Karzai will need to work non-stop to bring together all Afghans of goodwill.

France will be at the Afghan people's side in this critical phase in the democratic life of the country, a life that will also allow them to redefine relations between Afghanistan and the international community for the years to come.

With its allies and partners, France will remain committed as long as necessary so that Afghanistan will be able to regain full control of their destiny.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.8.

I would like to inform the Assembly that, since the issuance of draft resolution A/64/L.8, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Chile, El Salvador, Fiji, Mauritius, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.8?

Draft resolution A/64/L.8 was adopted (resolution 64/11).

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.