



General Assembly

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45th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 38 (continued)

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/552)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.9)

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this debate and thanks Germany for facilitating negotiations on today's draft resolution (A/65/L.9), which we are happy to co-sponsor.

It has been nearly 10 years since New Zealand first committed its Special Forces, and then provided a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamiyan Province, to support an Afghanistan that needed strong international support to meet its many challenges. We did so acutely aware that as well as almost continuous internal war, Afghanistan had, in recent memory, seen the 1978 coup, the 1979 Soviet invasion and a repressive Taliban regime that brutalized the Afghan population, oppressed women, quashed education, supported global terrorism and harboured an Al-Qaida insurgency. Those are just a few milestones in a difficult history in which, since 1978, 2 million civilians have died and many more have fled as refugees.

Afghanistan has come a long way since then. Even in the year since this General Assembly last debated this topic there have been significant developments — parliamentary elections, the London and Kabul conferences and the Peace Jirga being notable examples of events that have contributed to a more secure country.

Many aspects of the situation in Afghanistan might be addressed today, but in the interests of time I will focus on just four: First, New Zealand applauds those millions of Afghans who voted in the recent parliamentary elections, many of them facing intimidation and defying threats of violence to elect their parliament. We cannot — and do not — hold Afghanistan to the measure of long-standing, established, mature democracies, but we are disappointed that, in some areas, voting could not be conducted because of security concerns and other deliberate obstruction of polling.

On the other hand, while it is very troubling that almost a quarter of a million votes cast were invalidated by the Independent Electoral Commission, it is positive that that action resulted from an oversight system that seems to be working and that Afghanistan was able to conduct those elections itself, including keeping the level of violence well below what many had feared. It is also positive that the quota for women members of parliament was exceeded and that, generally, those elected came from diverse backgrounds and included a significant number of new candidates. All that said, the electoral process had its shortcomings. We would now call on the Independent

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Electoral Commission and others involved to maintain and enhance their rigorous oversight over all such elections. Those who courageously voted are entitled to see that same resolve mirrored in those they elected and to expect that their new Parliament and all levels of Government will show they can work on behalf of and be accountable to all Afghans. That would ensure that the will of the people is reflected in the actions of the Government and that the central Government and the provinces are connected as a cohesive whole.

Secondly, an essential element of capable and credible governance is the elimination of corruption. Corruption is corrosive — it undermines domestic and international confidence, destroys capacity, hinders growth and has sorely tested the capacity of contributing nations to maintain or enhance their contributions to Afghanistan. We call on the agencies of central Government and the new Parliament to set a priority on seeking out and eliminating corruption.

Thirdly, while there have been improvements, we remain concerned at the security situation. The parliamentary elections were held during one of Afghanistan's most violent periods since the Taliban was driven from power — violence that has affected Afghans, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and others. Indeed, even with two months still to go, 2010 has already been for ISAF the deadliest year of the war.

However, although the security situation remains tenuous, there have been some positive developments. The faster than expected build-up of the Afghan National Security Forces and this year's increase of nearly 40,000 ISAF troops are providing dividends that New Zealand believes must be reinvested in improved governance, social programmes and economic development. Those dividends will also help ensure that primary responsibility for Afghanistan's security can be transferred to the Afghan National Security Forces, thus allowing international forces to draw down and shift the focus of international efforts to building civilian capacities.

For its part, in Bamyan province, New Zealand leads the Provincial Reconstruction Team and, in Kabul, our special forces are mentoring the Afghan Crisis Response Unit. Bamyan is a leading candidate for transition, and New Zealand is committed to

ensuring that the province can assume responsibility for its own security, governance and development.

Fourthly, the security challenges in Afghanistan are a reminder that fighting alone will not secure Afghanistan's future. There must also be a political solution in which hard-core insurgency leaders are further isolated, while the majority are integrated into mainstream society. Accommodation will be required on all sides but should never go so far as to compromise hard-fought rights and freedoms, especially those of women and minorities. Those who have put themselves in harm's way in Afghanistan have not done so to witness, again, officially sanctioned restrictions on human rights.

The High Council for Peace will play an important role in any such political settlement, as will Afghanistan's neighbours. In January, New Zealand was encouraged when Pakistan announced its backing for the reconciliation process and, likewise, we welcomed the June Afghan-Pakistan declaration on bilateral cooperation. Pakistan has an interest in a stable State on its western border, and it is clear that pressure from Pakistan on insurgents could be critical in encouraging them to lay down their arms. Achieving peace and reconciliation is the ultimate responsibility of the Government and people of Afghanistan, but we also look forward to positive, closer engagement of Pakistan and Afghanistan's other near neighbours in that process.

The situation in Afghanistan affects many of us in this Assembly — whether through involvement with UNAMA or ISAF, geographic proximity or because of the insidious effects of the terrorism that was once nurtured on Afghan soil. While it is the responsibility of the Afghan Government to lead efforts to improve governance, stamp out corruption and foster a political solution to the conflict, all of us have a supporting role to play. For its part, New Zealand is committed to supporting the Government and people of Afghanistan in Bamyan province, in Kabul and elsewhere.

New Zealand soldiers were among the first to join the campaign against terrorism nearly 10 years ago; New Zealanders were among the first to commit to Afghanistan's reconstruction; and, today, we continue to stand with the people of Afghanistan. They have our support as they grow as a nation, and they have our support in securing a better future for all Afghans.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join other Member States in co-sponsoring the General Assembly's draft resolution (A/65/L.9) on the situation in Afghanistan. The draft resolution recognizes the progress made by the Afghan people in building a stronger Afghanistan and acknowledges that much important work remains.

We commend the significant contributions of the United Nations to Afghanistan, noting especially the crucial roles played by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other United Nations agencies on the ground. We also salute the bravery of the Afghan security forces and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), who are helping to build a more secure Afghanistan.

Violent attacks by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist and criminal groups threaten our common efforts to achieve stability and security. Those groups use violence to oppose the Afghan Government's vision of an Afghanistan that is stable, secure, just and prosperous.

We share that vision and echo the draft resolution's firm condemnation of such violence, including the 23 October attack on the United Nations compound in Herat. We applaud the decisive response of Afghan security forces and ISAF to that attack, which averted greater bloodshed, and we welcome the United Nations unwavering commitment to Afghanistan, even in the face of such violence.

The United States joins the Afghan Government in its efforts to seek a political resolution to the violence in Afghanistan through reconciliation, insofar as insurgents agree to cut ties to Al-Qaida, renounce violence against the Afghan State by laying down arms and agree to abide by the Afghan Constitution, including its provisions guaranteeing the rights of women and all ethnic groups and religions.

We strongly support Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and are committed to a long-term partnership with Afghanistan. In that connection, we have more than tripled the number of United States civilians working in Afghanistan from 320 in January 2009 to more than 1,000 today.

The efforts of the United States, NATO and other ISAF contributor nations have focused increasingly on providing trainers and funding to develop and support

the Afghan National Security Forces, in line with President Karzai's goal to have Afghanistan take over the lead security responsibility throughout the nation by 2014. That transition will be governed by careful assessments of conditions on the ground and the capacity of the Afghan forces.

This July more than 60 nations and international organizations recommitted themselves to building a stronger Afghanistan at the Kabul Conference. We call on all Member States to redouble their efforts to promote stability and prosperity for the Afghan people, along with peace and security for the region.

We know there are great challenges ahead but the United States and our international partners are working closely with the Afghan people to support their efforts to lay the foundation for a better, more stable and prosperous future.

Mr. Rivard (Canada): Canada is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution before us on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9). 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 the 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.

Canada remains concerned by the security situation in the country, but we note that, in spite of continued challenges, the Afghan National Security Forces are growing in confidence, capacity and capability. Canada will continue working with the Afghan people to help set the conditions for a successful transition to greater Afghan leadership on security. We strongly support the Kabul process in charting the way forward towards Afghanistan's sustainable development, as well as the supporting role of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. We look forward to working with the Government of Afghanistan and our partners in the international community in realizing the objectives of the process and delivering concrete results for the people of Afghanistan.

Promoting and protecting human rights, including women's rights, is a core element of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. The good work of institutions such as the Afghan Independent Human

Rights Commission is an important expression of Afghanistan's own commitment to universal human rights. Canada welcomes the Afghan Government's recent decision to provide the Commission with core budget support; we urge it do so in a manner that preserves the independence of that body.

(spoke in French)

The recent parliamentary elections are a step in the country's ongoing democratic transition as the Government of Afghanistan continues to strengthen governance and democratic institutions. We note with concern the allegations of electoral irregularities and fraud, and we look to Afghanistan's electoral institutions to address them in an open and transparent manner. Canada looks forward to the release of final, certified results by the Independent Electoral Commission following the adjudication of complaints by the Electoral Complaints Commission. In the long term, the institutional and professional capacity of electoral bodies must continue to develop, the public's awareness of their political rights must increase, and the needs of key civil society organizations must continue to be supported. Those form the foundations of the democratic process and improved elections in the future.

We recognize that many challenges remain in Afghanistan's development, but we are hopeful about the progress made to date. Canada and the international community remain committed to helping Afghans rebuild Afghanistan into a country that enjoys prosperity, sound governance, peace and security.

Mr. Koterec (Slovakia): Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We stand firmly behind the Union's Common Position on the situation in Afghanistan.

Slovakia is one of the sponsors of the comprehensive draft resolution presented by Germany (A/65/L.9). The number of sponsors underlines the scope of the support extended to Afghanistan. I thank Germany for its fruitful efforts to facilitate a consensus within the international community on the renewed message of encouragement that covers all aspects of the country's achievements and needs, with a principal focus on transition. On this occasion, I would like to point out some aspects of particular importance to my country.

Afghanistan, a country torn by war for 30 years, is indisputably a priority for all of us. Slovakia is committed to assisting Afghanistan and contributes to its stability and security within the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and through civilian development activities. Together with other countries, Slovakia will remain engaged as long as needed and requested, until Afghanistan is able on its own to sustain the security that will pave the way for development.

As agreed at the Kabul Conference, we consider the phased transition of security responsibilities to the Afghan leadership to be our primary task. This past spring, Slovakia increased its troop contribution to ISAF to 300, and we are now preparing another increase. Yesterday, 3 November, the Slovak Government agreed to a new mandate for our troops. Our new military contribution will be primarily focused on supporting the transition process, including the training and stand-up of the Afghan National Security Forces. We will deploy an explosive ordnance disposal team for the purpose of protecting the civil population and ISAF forces from mines and improvised explosive devices, which cause huge human casualties. At the same time, we are withdrawing our national caveats for most of our troops.

Apart from our military engagement, we are expanding all components of our comprehensive approach to Afghanistan. It is among three priority programme countries of Slovak official development assistance, and we plan to review by the end of 2010 how our assistance can be better distributed. We are currently establishing a mechanism allowing the deployment of civilian personnel in Afghanistan.

I wish to mention a number of projects that the Slovak Government, together with non-governmental organizations, universities and the private sector, has recently completed or is actively working on. They include reintegrating displaced persons and returnees in Qarah Bagh; establishing a gastroenterological centre in Kabul; educating mothers on how to take care of healthy or sick children through publicly available teaching panels and building capacities at Kabul Polytechnic University; supporting the socio-economic development of rural communities in Parwan province through the active involvement of women; expanding the urgent-care capacities of the hospital in Lodin; building a cultural, educational and social centre in

Kunduz province; and educating inhabitants of rural communities on more effective ways of profiting from agriculture.

We believe that, through targeted projects that are well coordinated and aligned with the priorities of the Afghan Government, we can improve the daily life of the Afghan people. We can bring hope and convey assurances that support is given not only at the highest but at all levels. We need the understanding and trust of the Afghans to fulfil our common goal of establishing a secure, stable and prosperous country.

In conclusion, let me express my hope that the international community, united behind the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, remains committed to assisting the Afghan Government in the quest for lasting peace and security and to achieving full Afghan ownership of the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Kazakhstan on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/552).

In recent years, thanks to the leadership of the Afghan Government, the help of the international community and the untiring efforts of the Afghans themselves, reconstruction in the country has made headway.

The success of the International Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul this July marked an important step in the Kabul process and pointed the reconstruction process in the right direction. The smooth and successful holding of the parliamentary elections on 18 September was a major political event that demonstrated the notable progress towards the establishment of an Afghanistan run by the Afghans themselves.

At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Afghan reconstruction process is still fraught with many challenges that call for the continued efforts of the Afghan Government and people and the sustained attention and support of the international community.

Every step forward in Afghanistan is the result of the serious commitment and vigorous support of the international community. We appreciate what has been

done by the United Nations in promoting Afghanistan's reconstruction and support the United Nations coordinating role. I should like to highlight the following five points in that regard.

First, in order to achieve peace, stability and development, the Government and people of Afghanistan need to be in the driver's seat with a view to full Afghan ownership. We support the Afghan Government's efforts in capacity-building, with a view to exercising its full and effective control over the entire territory.

Secondly, in order to advance the Kabul process and further progress, balanced efforts should be made in economic development, security, stability, national reconciliation, good governance, the rule of law and the fight against narcotics.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to help the Government of Afghanistan to enhance its capacity to ensure national security and facilitate the building of its military and police forces. China is very concerned about the deterioration of the security situation and increased security incidents that have resulted in a significant number of civilian casualties. The transfer of responsibility for security should be preceded by the securing of the country's stability.

Fourthly, on the basis of respect for Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the international community should honour its commitment to assisting that country in the spirit of consensus reflected in the communiqué of the Kabul Conference. The international community should align its assistance with the Afghan National Development Strategy and the priority areas identified by the Afghans.

Fifthly, the narcotics problem is a malignant tumour endangering the country's security and stability, and is spreading to Afghanistan's neighbours. The international community should pay more attention to Afghanistan's fight against narcotics and help with the implementation of the national counter-narcotics strategy.

Afghanistan is a friendly neighbour of China. We respect Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We closely follow developments in the country and actively support, facilitate and engage in its reconstruction. From 2002 to 2009, China

provided more than ¥900 million in grant assistance, cancelled \$19.5 million in mature debts, and was involved in seven construction projects. Since January this year, China has provided an additional ¥160 million in grant assistance in such fields as infrastructure, health care, sanitation and education. The two countries exchanged letters of zero-tariff treatment for certain Afghan exports to China, covering more than 4,000 items. In addition, China will continue to step up the training of Afghan professionals, implement more projects, and provide assistance to those areas in the country which most urgently require it.

We believe that, with the efforts by the Afghan Government and people and the help of the international community, Afghanistan will emerge from the shadow of war very soon, embark on the path to sustainable development and contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We are confident that, under his able leadership, this session will come to a successful conclusion and make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of our common goals.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. In addition, allow me to make some additional points in my national capacity.

Facing up to the modern world involves many great challenges, and even small countries like Montenegro have their share of responsibility. It remains crucial, particularly with respect to the challenges posed by the situation in Afghanistan, for the international community to stay actively engaged in the recovery phase of that country, as it will have profound impact on its future. It is important to stress that we have so far been able to take this process in the right direction, but at the same time we have to be prepared for the long and hard road ahead.

Montenegro is certainly committed to seeking progress towards the achievement of the ultimate goal, shared by Afghanistan and the international community, of establishing a stable and secure Afghanistan. In this context, allow me to highlight the ways in which Montenegro is contributing to the

overall process of rebuilding the country and moving forward on the development of its democratic society.

Soon after Montenegro regained its independence in 2006, my country donated light weapons and ammunition to Afghanistan. In addition, since March this year, a Montenegrin infantry and medical team has been stationed in northern Afghanistan, within a Hungarian contingent and under German command, as part of the International Security Assistance Force mission. We would like to take this opportunity to thank these two countries, as well as our other partners, for the excellent cooperation and support they continuously provide us.

In the total number of international forces engaged in Afghanistan, the contribution of Montenegro is symbolic. However, it constitutes 2 per cent of our armed forces, which themselves are going through a dynamic process of reform. Moreover, together with Croatia, my country has launched an initiative to explore the possibility of training a joint team of instructors that would provide assistance to the Afghan Security Forces. This initiative is open for all other Balkan countries to join.

Montenegro also took part in the London Conference in January and the Kabul Conference in July, thus showing its dedication to participating actively in seeking a sustainable solution for the successful conclusion of the transition process. We believe that reconciliation and the strengthening of trust among different ethnic and political structures in Afghanistan are of crucial importance to the credibility of this process. It is also of utmost importance that all countries, big and small, be willing and ready to join these efforts and provide assistance within their capacities, so that the ongoing process can be successfully and fully achieved.

The draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9) is yet another step aimed at sending a clear signal of support to the efforts of the international community to assist the Afghan people in defence of their country and in building a better, more prosperous and safer Afghanistan based on the rule of law. In co-sponsoring the draft resolution, Montenegro joined a large cross-regional group of countries and once again showed its full support and commitment to the Afghan people and the situation in Afghanistan. In that light, we expect to see the draft resolution adopted by consensus as a sign of the unity and solidarity of the

United Nations and the whole international community with Afghanistan.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for and satisfaction with the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.9). We would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Germany for its efforts as facilitator to find common ground and to reach a consensus. We are pleased to be co-sponsoring the draft resolution, which is a balanced document reflecting achievements so far, as well as the remaining challenges in Afghanistan.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to be serious. Constant, intensive and coordinated efforts are required to maintain the initiative. We are glad to see that the Government of Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, has been doing just that.

Turkey commends the Government of Afghanistan for holding the second parliamentary elections since 2001 on 18 September, as planned, in spite of the difficult security conditions, and the Afghan people for their interest and participation in the elections. We condemn all attacks and attempts to undermine the election process with violence and offer our condolences for those who lost their lives.

We are very appreciative of the efforts of the United Nations in Afghanistan, in particular the assistance provided during the elections, and are heartened that the United Nations is determined to do its utmost, even in the face of attacks. Turkey condemns the terrorist attack on the United Nations compound in Herat on 23 October in the strongest terms. Such deliberate terrorist attacks should not deter us; they should only strengthen our determination to assist the Afghan people in establishing lasting peace and stability. We salute the courage of the United Nations and Afghan staff and assure them of our continued support and solidarity.

The elections were another step forward in the consolidation of Afghanistan's democratic institutions and national unity. The holding of the elections was made possible by the determined efforts of the Afghan authorities and the support of the international community to that Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process. After the election process has been completed in full, the Afghan Government and the international community will be able to focus in greater depth on Afghanization.

Ensuring the durability of the achievements made so far in Afghanistan is directly linked to cementing Afghan ownership, as well as empowering Afghans. The Kabul Conference was a turning point in that regard. The Afghan Government and the international community should now focus on the implementation of the Kabul process, the most important message of which is Afghan ownership. In that regard, we are glad to see that the Afghan Government is showing strong political will to take that process forward. On the other hand, the international community should be steadfast in its commitments and assist the Afghan Government in a manner that conforms to the conditions, priorities and requirements on the ground.

Lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan ultimately require political reconciliation. That process should seek to embrace all segments of society, give them fair opportunities to serve the Afghan cause and enable their representation. Afghanistan can overcome the hurdles it has encountered for so long only through enhanced unity and solidarity at the national level.

Turkey has maintained the most comprehensive assistance programme in its history with various civilian and military capabilities in support of Afghanistan's historic process of transformation. What is vital in Afghanistan is to win over the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Comprehensive civilian efforts are essential in that regard. Accordingly, our efforts are directed primarily at helping to improve the quality of life of the Afghans. In that regard, we put particular emphasis on education, health and agricultural development, as well as capacity-building.

Turkey is also particularly active in support of regional cooperation. To that effect, we strive to reinvigorate the cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, as well as across the region, with a view to encouraging the countries involved to jointly address the challenges that affect them as a whole. We firmly believe that an essential pillar of ensuring the irreversibility of the process under way in Afghanistan is directly linked to ensuring better, result-oriented cooperation at the regional level.

In that vein, before the year ends we will have hosted no less than 20 major international meetings in support of regional and international cooperation, with a particular focus on Afghanistan. Those include three summit-level and several ministerial meetings. We very recently hosted the fourth Regional Economic

Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Istanbul, and held the Academic Platform for Afghanistan meeting with the participation of academics from countries represented at the Conference.

Turkey is confident that Afghanistan's stability and social and political harmony will grow stronger in the future. The Kabul Conference was an important milestone towards the attainment of those goals. The implementation of the process requires determined leadership on the part of the Afghan authorities and the close coordination of Afghanistan's partners. For its part, Turkey is ready to do its utmost.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We would also like to express our appreciation for the successful facilitation efforts of Germany and are proud to join the impressive list of sponsors. I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting because this debate gives us a good opportunity to renew the international community's message of solidarity and support for the Afghan people on their path towards peace, security and democracy.

Lithuania welcomed the decision of the Security Council in October to extend the authorization of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for one year (see S/PV.6395). In our view, the presence of the international community in Afghanistan, and of ISAF in particular, is essential to supporting the efforts of the Afghan people in building a stable and secure Afghanistan. The implementation of development projects and administrative capacity-building are impossible without the stabilization of the security situation in that country.

Lithuania welcomes the decisions of the London and Kabul Conferences, which set a clear agenda and agreed criteria for the transition to full responsibility of the Afghan people. The political will of the Afghan President and Government to meet the commitments undertaken on reforming the country is highly important.

The recent parliamentary elections showed the potential of the Government to take responsibility for the administration of the country. In the context of that transition, the United Nations and its agencies must continue to offer all necessary support and assistance, which will be even more important as the process of transition to Afghan-led security will start next year.

An assessment of the situation shows the enormous scope of the tasks ahead. However, dealing adequately with the tasks of improving overall security, implementing development projects tailored to local needs, building local capabilities, improving governance and administration, and fighting corruption demand that continuous and balanced attention be given to all provinces; if it is not, our gains in some areas risk being undercut by a lack of progress, or even regression, in others.

We have seen this ourselves in Ghor province, where we have been leading a provincial reconstruction team since 2005. The lack of attention to the province's real needs on the part of the central Government creates tensions within local society and between local government and local people. We therefore would like to see the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) more vigorously encourage the Afghan Government not only to concentrate on national programmes but to be more active in the regions, leaving no forgotten pockets on the map of that large country.

Through its 23 field offices, UNAMA has proven to be an invaluable support to the Afghan Government in its efforts to improve security, governance and economic development across the country. We believe that manning the field offices with additional numbers of dedicated expert advisers would be strongly welcomed by local authorities and representatives of the international community on the ground. An enhanced UNAMA presence in the provinces would undoubtedly benefit the Afghan people and help the authorities to better prepare for taking over full responsibility for the country.

Let me also stress the need to combine and coordinate the work undertaken by various countries and international organizations in Afghanistan. Closer cooperation among the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations, as well as regional players, including Afghanistan's neighbours, would benefit the people of Afghanistan. Building regional and global consensus on the transformation of Afghanistan should be a key guideline for further United Nations action.

For Lithuania, which will assume OSCE chairmanship in 2011, the regional dimension is highly pertinent. We are currently considering how we can

enhance the OCSE role in Central Asia, including joint OSCE projects and initiatives on border management and travel document security in the region bordering Afghanistan.

Development cooperation is a powerful instrument in helping to build administrative capacities and in developing local economies and civil society. We believe that there is room to further improve coordination and cooperation among donor countries. For our part, we are happy to be jointly working on development cooperation projects in Ghor province with our partners from Japan, the United States, Greece and other countries.

In this context, let me remind the Assembly that Lithuania will hold a development cooperation ministerial conference on the theme "The road to successful transition in Afghanistan, province by province", which will take place on 12 November in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The conference will focus on development cooperation potential as an instrument for the implementation of the transition process. We hope that the conference will help to contribute to the success of implementing the goals and objectives of Afghanistan's transition to peaceful, secure and democratic development.

Mr. Ashour (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are gathered here once again to consider the situation in Afghanistan against the backdrop of ongoing suffering and insecurity in that country and continued unjustified murders of civilians by the Taliban and the international forces. Innocent civilians, unfortunately, are still, as always, the victims. We condemn the tragic and repeated incidents that have targeted civilians in Afghanistan, including women and children. Despite successive calls for the necessary measures to be taken to end them, these very troubling incidents persist. We therefore call on the international forces to act swiftly to prevent these tragic incidents and their consequences from recurring. Independent, fair and impartial inquiries must be carried out in order to charge those responsible and deny them impunity.

We are deeply concerned by the failure of the international forces to achieve peace in Afghanistan, given that the strategies are focused on and aimed at achieving a military victory there, regardless of civilian losses. Many Afghans are driven into the ranks of the rebels in reaction to the murder of civilians and

because of their feelings of social and political marginalization.

My delegation reiterates its belief that a solution to the situation lies not in enhancing military strength, but in a comprehensive solution to the situation in Afghanistan on the basis of comprehensive national reconciliation aimed at achieving the overall development of the country. In this respect, we support calls by some political leaders in Afghanistan for the conclusion of a ceasefire with the Taliban as a step towards achieving stability in the country. It goes without saying that if the money that has been and is still being spent on the war in Afghanistan had been spent on development projects, peace and prosperity would already have been achieved and Afghanistan would not be what it is today.

The international community is focused on helping the Afghan people to build a democratic, stable and prosperous State. The war is not being waged against the Taliban or other parties, particularly since an approach based on the use of force cannot, by its very nature, ensure security and stability if it is not matched by efforts to establish a dialogue aimed at achieving national reconciliation among all sectors of the Afghan population, repudiating violence, fighting corruption and combating drug trafficking.

That is why the international community must support programmes and activities that allow Afghanistan to fulfil all its responsibilities as a sovereign country capable of providing security and offering a life of dignity to all its citizens, as well as creating the conditions necessary for the withdrawal of foreign forces. That last condition is a *sine qua non* for the achievement of national reconciliation.

In addition, the role and mandate of the International Security Assistance Force must be urgently strengthened and provided with the necessary resources. Support for a larger presence of and more efficient contribution by United Nations agencies must be provided, in particular in terms of development and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan, not to mention State-building. We hope that the international community will continue to support and assist Afghanistan more effectively with a view to ensuring full stability and sustainable development.

Creating an environment favourable to the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan is a basic precondition for achieving national

reconciliation, which cannot be achieved while the foreign occupation continues. We are therefore reassured by the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/552), which takes note of the political progress represented by the recent convening of the Kabul Conference, which sought primarily to promote the capacity of Afghans to take a leading role in and responsibility for their own future as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we hope that due regard will be given to the Secretary-General's evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and of the Mission's own priorities, which it submitted in a report to be issued by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in December. We hope that that report will take account of progress made in all areas with a view to helping Afghanistan finally escape the vicious cycle of violence that has persisted for more than 30 years.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.9.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat to announce additional sponsors.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to inform the Assembly that, since the issuance of draft resolution A/65/L.9, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Argentina, Belarus, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, France, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Morocco, Oman, Palau, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): A similar resolution on this item was adopted without a vote at the previous session (resolution 64/11). May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.9?

Draft resolution A/65/L.9 was adopted (resolution 65/8).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.