



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

40th plenary meeting

Thursday, 10 December 2020, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

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

Agenda item 39

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/378)

Draft resolution (A/75/L.45)

The President: For 40 years, the General Assembly has addressed the situation in Afghanistan, focusing on peace, stability, good governance, human rights and development. This year there has been welcome progress on many fronts in Afghanistan's path towards peace and political reconciliation.

First, I welcome the growing optimism towards a negotiated settlement. I am encouraged by the common desire of the parties towards a peaceful and negotiated settlement in Afghanistan.

Secondly, peace and security in Afghanistan are inextricably linked to development. They are interdependent. I am therefore very pleased to note the renewed interest of the international community and the significant support for long-term assistance to Afghanistan expressed at the 2020 Afghanistan Conference, co-hosted by the Governments of Afghanistan and Finland and the United Nations in Geneva.

Thirdly, I strongly welcome the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to implement its mandated tasks. The United Nations must remain committed to promoting sustainable peace

and stability and boldly reforming its role in ushering in a new era in Afghanistan.

Fourthly, engaging women and other vulnerable groups in the peace efforts is a sine qua non for sustainable peace and inclusive development. I therefore welcome the increased participation of women across many sectors of Government and the private sector, as well as the creation of a technical committee to review the law of 2009 on the elimination of violence against women.

The benefits of peace should be directed towards the people of Afghanistan, who have been waiting for a genuine opportunity for peace and prosperity for nearly 40 years. We cannot disappoint them again. Violence, the threat of terrorism, the unstable security situation and the increasing number of civilian casualties might derail the Afghan-led Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation negotiations, which remain the only path to enduring peace and stability.

The additional challenges arising from the coronavirus disease pandemic and climate change also threaten the progress achieved in Afghanistan. We must ensure that we factor in those additional risks so that they do not undermine the progress already made.

I encourage the Assembly to come together and push to consolidate the opportunity for peace and development that has been presented to support Afghanistan.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.45.

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

Of all the special years for Afghanistan declared in the past two decades, 2020 was indeed singular. Most important, it saw the start of the Afghanistan peace negotiations on 12 September. For the first time, representatives of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban sat together to discuss ways to end the conflict and work towards a peaceful future for the country.

That was possible because important milestones had been reached in the preceding months — the United States-Taliban agreement and the joint declaration of the United States and the Republic of Afghanistan concluded in February; the agreement between the two pre-eminent political leaders of Afghanistan reached in May after the conclusion of the presidential elections; and two ceasefires, albeit short-lived, as well as the release of thousands of prisoners, which provided proof of the sincere commitment to peace, particularly on the part of the Republic of Afghanistan.

A little more than two weeks ago, we witnessed the Afghanistan Conference 2020 in Geneva, which once again confirmed that the international community stands firmly behind the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its ongoing quest to achieve self-reliance. Donors pledged more than \$13 billion in foreign aid and stabilization.

Finally, as this extraordinary year draws to an end, we witnessed the agreement on rules of procedure between the Republic of Afghanistan's negotiating team and the Taliban on 2 December and the first session of the High Council for National Reconciliation three days later. All that is happening against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which is having a devastating impact in Afghanistan and creating profound challenges for its health system and socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. It is also happening against the backdrop of a tense security situation that has seen a severe spike in violence in the fall and several high-profile attacks in the last few months. An immediate, permanent and comprehensive ceasefire is an indispensable necessity for the peace negotiations to proceed and eventually succeed.

Draft resolution A/75/L.45, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan", has taken all those issues on board, and indeed many more, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance, counter-narcotics, social and

economic development, refugees, regional cooperation and human rights. I would like to underline — as today is International Human Rights Day — that human rights play a very important role in the draft resolution.

As its long-standing facilitator, Germany has thoroughly updated and streamlined the draft resolution. We have not done so alone but together with the entire plenary, giving every country a voice while listening carefully to the concerns of the countries of the region, international donors, troop contributors and those closely supporting the peace process. Most important, we have listened to what the Republic of Afghanistan itself has to say about the situation in Afghanistan. After all, we unanimously support an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

Negotiations this year were rather unusual, as was the case for many draft resolutions considered in 2020. We opted for a full virtual experience, with representatives working from their living rooms and writing in the chat box what they would normally have written on a piece of paper to pass to the Chair. That made consultations more efficient but also less personal. We all miss the cookies and coffee breaks. We promise to go back to German House as soon as the pandemic is behind us.

While the draft resolution will find the support of many delegations — to date there are more than 60 co-sponsors, including 27 original co-sponsors — it will not please everyone, mainly owing to our streamlining efforts. The draft resolution had grown in length over the years, to reach a full 16 pages last year, and it had become impossible to go through the entire document in a single reading. As facilitator, we were compelled to act and cut out some of the long enumerations of organizations, projects and ministerial meetings, whose only merit was pleasing some of us.

For Afghanistan, it is important to look towards the future. That is why our focus in the draft resolution has moved away from dwelling on past achievements. It is also why we made the long-announced and carefully weighed decision to turn the draft resolution into a biennial document. That has become the norm for many resolutions and will give us some time to think long and hard about what we collectively would like to see in the draft resolution. It is also an opportunity to craft a more strategic, forward-looking document. We need to be bold, especially in the remaining four years of Afghanistan's transformation decade. Now is the time.

Of course, we would like to go back to adoption by consensus; however, we are not ready to do so at any price. I ask members to vote in favour of the draft resolution. Despite what some delegations will say later on, it is a constructive and forward-looking draft. Our experts worked hard on it, often finding a compromise only after hours of debate. I ask that members reward those unrelenting efforts by lending their support to the draft resolution. It remains, first and foremost, an important expression of support for Afghanistan and its people by the entire membership of the United Nations.

Mrs. Raz (Afghanistan): Let me thank you, Mr. President, from the bottom of my heart for the statement and the summary you delivered earlier, on behalf of what is a priority for Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan.

I also would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Germany for introducing draft resolution A/75/L.45 and acting as facilitator during the negotiations of the final text. Ambassador Christoph Heusgen and his team, led by Counsellor Friedrich Schroeder, have accomplished a commendable task in leading the conversation at a time when in-person meetings and negotiations are still difficult. I am sure that Mr. Schroeder has more grey hair after managing the negotiations.

We thank Germany for its commitment to lead the General Assembly in support of the Afghan people in our efforts to achieve a peaceful, prosperous, stable and self-reliant Afghanistan. I would like to thank the representatives of all other Member States, as well as our neighbours, the region and our allies and friends, who showed flexibility, looked for compromises and continuously supported the desire and wishes of the Afghan people for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

I would particularly like to extend my deepest appreciation to the more than 60 countries that have co-sponsored today's important draft resolution. I would like to thank them all for standing with us today.

The draft resolution we will adopt reflects Afghanistan's priority, progress, challenges, mutual commitments and joint efforts for a prosperous and stable country. In fact, it echoes the hopes and longings of the Afghan people, unanimously supported and shared by all Member States, for security and a long-awaited peace. It calls for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire to end the conflict in Afghanistan. It calls for expanding the gains of the past two decades and places at the centre the sovereignty,

independence, territorial integrity and national unity of a democratic Afghanistan.

The draft resolution summarizes the shared achievement of the past 19 years, attained through our international and regional partners' support and investment in the new Afghanistan. It commends the efforts and progress of my nation and its political, economic, governance and social reforms. It recognizes the urgency and necessities of people in need and the importance of poverty reduction. It solidifies our joint approach to deliver services, stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities and increase domestic revenues. It stresses the need to continue to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic processes, which are my Government's top priorities. It welcomes the promotion of an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, including the full and meaningful participation of women and young people.

The draft resolution also emphasizes the important role of regional cooperation in promoting long-term stability, peace, security, prosperity and sustainable development and welcomes the efforts of international partners and regional and neighbouring countries. As often said by His Excellency President Ghani, regional cooperation and regional connectivity are key and effective means for us in promoting and bringing about peace, security, stability and economic development in Afghanistan and the region.

I would like to highlight in that regard the vision of Afghanistan to become a regional hub for connectivity, transport, energy, industry, trade and digital connectivity. It is important that I highlight the role and contribution of our neighbours and regional partners, as well as regional organizations, in realizing that vision.

Last but not least, the draft resolution also highlights security threats and conveys a deep concern about the threat posed to Afghanistan by terrorism in the region on the part of Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other international terrorist organizations and their affiliates.

While we focus on achieving peace, the Government of Afghanistan has not lowered its guard or diminished its efforts to fend off attacks by the Taliban or other terrorist groups. The serious threats and heinous acts of terror by ISIL, Al-Qaida and other terrorist group continue to take the lives of innocent people in

Afghanistan. Our brave Afghan National Defence and Security Forces have continued their relentless efforts to repel any attempt by those groups, which have shown an apparent lack of humanity and continued to target the civilian population and infrastructure, in clear violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The draft resolution also recognizes the serious threat and harm caused by illicit opium cultivation, production and trafficking to the security, development and governance of Afghanistan, the region and beyond. The Afghan Government is a committed partner in the fight against that serious threat, but in order to fight it effectively we must first recognize the linkages between narcotics and terrorism.

The revenue from narcotics is an important source of support for terrorist groups, which continue to fund their operations through the cultivation, production and trafficking of illegal drugs, thereby gravely affecting Afghanistan. Despite the challenges, the Afghan Government has continued to respond through its efforts to target, seize, dismantle and destroy drug stockpiles and laboratories of illicit drugs. We believe that those efforts must be supported by comprehensive regional and international efforts that focus on tackling the root causes that contribute to illicit trade, eliminating financial safe havens, reducing consumption and demand and preventing the trafficking of the chemical precursors used for the production of those drugs and of improvised explosives.

The draft resolution welcomes the recent developments achieved in the peace talks held in Doha. Not too long ago, the negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban reached a breakthrough, concluding an agreement on the rules and procedures for Afghanistan's peace negotiations. Discussions are ongoing between the teams on the agenda of the peace talks. Back in Afghanistan, our High Council for National Reconciliation held its first meeting, emphasizing the importance of unity among political actors for the achievement of a final settlement for a peaceful Afghanistan.

However, violence continues to be the main hurdle against peace. It slows down the progress of the process and, more important, causes immense suffering to innocent people. The attacks on educational institutions, including Kabul University, have highlighted that, without a reduction in violence or a lasting ceasefire,

the people of Afghanistan will continue to live under the same fear that has shaken the country over the past four decades.

The need for a ceasefire is urgent and at the top of the Government's agenda to end all hostilities and pave the ground for progress in the peace talks. An immediate ceasefire will contribute to lasting peace, which the Government is committed to delivering, in line with the mandate of the people as expressed in last year's National Consultative Peace Jirga. In addition, the pledging conference held recently in Geneva renewed the partnership between the international community and the people and the Government of Afghanistan. The conference communiqué, which was supported by 66 countries and 32 international organizations, reflects the core priorities of the Afghan Government and people.

We entered the conference conscious of the need to establish higher standards on accountability, transparency and efficiency, which were reflected in the new Afghanistan Partnership Framework. We thank the General Assembly for reasserting in today's draft resolution the values and objectives affirmed in Geneva.

Allow me to conclude by once again thanking all delegations that participated in negotiations on the draft resolution and all delegations in the Hall for their continued support. As I said before, the draft resolution is a manifestation of all Member States' support for Afghanistan's priorities and their solidarity with us at this critical juncture. It provides us with yet another opportunity to echo the strong message that all members can and will stand firmly in unity with the people of Afghanistan in our efforts to build a peaceful, prosperous and self-resilient country. We look forward to the support of the Assembly today.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Gonzato (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia-Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, together with Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Adela Raz, for her statement. I would also like to thank all the delegations that participated in the consultations on draft resolution A/75/L.45, in particular Ambassador Heusgen and his team for facilitating the negotiations.

Yesterday we all received a note verbale from the Afghan Mission asking for our support for the draft resolution. We hope that message from the country directly concerned was well received by all Member States and that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus today.

Afghanistan is at an important juncture. There is a historic opportunity for peace and stability, which all Afghans long for after decades of immense human suffering. The start of intra-Afghan talks on 12 December was an encouraging step towards genuine reconciliation and we, the international community, must support it. As Ambassador Raz stated, only an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process can lead to durable peace.

At the donors conference held on 23 and 24 November, the EU and its member States renewed their commitment to accompany Afghanistan on its path to peace, security, stability democracy, prosperity and self-reliance. Respect for human rights and the participation of the whole population, including the meaningful inclusion of women and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, are key components of the political process. The draft resolution reflects that consensus and provides a strong commitment of support for the people of Afghanistan.

The EU and its member States strongly condemn the horrific levels of violence in Afghanistan, which have continued and in certain respects even increased after the signing of the Doha Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan and the beginning of intra-Afghan direct negotiations. We call for an immediate, permanent and comprehensive ceasefire to save the Afghan people from further meaningless suffering and demonstrate sincerity in the peace negotiations. An unstable Afghanistan will continue to threaten and destabilize its neighbours, the wider region and beyond.

Illicit drug trafficking and terrorism do not recognize borders. The EU and its member States will remain vigilant to ensure that terrorist organizations and violent extremists no longer use Afghan soil to launch attacks in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Drug trafficking,

human trafficking, smuggling and all related organized crime networks must be stopped.

The Taliban continues to perpetrate an unacceptable number of deadly attacks all over the country, including in urban areas, causing substantial civilian losses. That brutality runs counter to the Taliban's stated commitment to peace and the declared sincerity of its participation in ongoing peace talks. The legitimacy of any leadership in Afghanistan starts with respecting the lives of the Afghan people. Those responsible for acts of horrific violence against civilians cannot be Afghanistan's leaders of tomorrow or partners of the international community.

In line with Security Council resolution 2513 (2020), the international community is ready to constructively support intra-Afghan peace negotiations, but that is contingent upon the parties' genuine engagement in the negotiations themselves. The lifting of sanctions is not automatic. The EU and its member States, notably the members of the Security Council, are determined to ensure that conditions are met before moving forward. Lasting peace cannot be based on the impunity of those who have committed gross violations of human rights. The sustained support of the EU and its member States for peace and development in Afghanistan is conditional and depends on progress in the peace process. Our contribution will be rooted in a transparent, democratic and principled approach. Gender equality, the full enjoyment of human rights by all Afghans, including women, young people and persons belonging to minorities, as well as victims of war, must be safeguarded and promoted. We also underline the need for continued progress on governance and an effective fight against corruption.

To conclude, I would like to reaffirm that the EU and its member States will stand with Afghanistan and its people to help build a sovereign, unified and democratic Afghanistan. The progress made since 2001 to preserve and promote democratic principles and human rights and fully implement the human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international conventions to which Afghanistan is a State party, including the rights of women, young people and people belonging to minorities, must be upheld.

A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan, free of terrorism and drug trafficking, is essential not only for its own stability and development but also for that of the entire region and beyond. A negotiated political

settlement leading to peace must result from an inclusive peace process.

We believe that the draft resolution reflects our collective political support for promoting an inclusive, Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process that builds on the political and social achievements of the past 19 years. Our mandate from European citizens is to contribute to the improvement of the lives of Afghan citizens, and our actions are guided by that mandate. The future of Afghanistan must not be compromised, and the interests of its people, in all their diversity, must be respected.

Mrs. Kocyigit Grba (Turkey): Turkey is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/75/L.45, on the situation in Afghanistan. We welcome the successful completion of the negotiations, led by Germany, and we thank all delegations that exerted genuine efforts to that end. We deem the draft resolution to be very important, as it not only highlights the achievements to date but also guides the future efforts and responsibilities of both Afghanistan and the international community.

Afghanistan continues its journey of political, security and economic transformation. The country is going through a crucial phase that should lead to a lasting and comprehensive peace agreement by putting an end to the persistent bloodshed, safeguarding the human rights of all Afghans, including women and children, and upholding the rule of law.

The achievements of the past two decades in Afghanistan need to be consolidated, which requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the security, development and political tracks at the same time. We would all like to see peace in Afghanistan, but peace gained at the price of those achievements is not peace.

We welcome the recent agreement on the procedural framework for intra-Afghan negotiations. That is a heartening sign for the future of the peace talks. It shows the commitment of the negotiating parties to continue the peace talks and their ability to find common ground. We hope that that development will pave the way for substantive discussions and give momentum to the peace process.

However, the agreement on the rules of procedure is only one step. It is essential to sustain the peace talks patiently, in particular on major issues, such as the political road map and ceasefire, which are expected to be more challenging matters.

Despite recent progress in the peace talks, violence in Afghanistan continues at different levels, and we strongly condemn those terrorist attacks. At this critical juncture, it has become ever more important to achieve a comprehensive ceasefire. A significant reduction in violence is necessary to create a conducive environment for the talks. The representation of all Afghans, including women, in the process is key to reaching lasting peace.

We welcome the holding of the first meeting of the High Council for National Reconciliation and hope that it will contribute to further advancing the peace process. We also welcome the finalization of the Cabinet by the Parliament. It is our hope that Afghan political leaders will work in harmony and in an inclusive manner for the well-being of the Afghan people.

Sound economic development is vital to the peace efforts. We are heartened by the renewal of international support for Afghanistan's development at the 2020 Geneva Conference. Despite the economic difficulties faced globally due to the coronavirus disease pandemic, the continuation of international assistance provides hope for a better future. In line with our strong commitment to Afghanistan, we announced a pledge of \$75 million for the next two years. We will continue to support efforts to achieve a lasting peace that upholds the achievements made in the fields of democracy and human rights, in particular women's rights.

That also entails efforts through regional mechanisms, such as the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, which enjoys a vast membership and a large area of expertise and has proved its great value over the years on critical issues for Afghanistan. The establishment of the first-ever confidence-building measure on women's empowerment at the Istanbul ministerial conference held last year was the most recent stunning example. We reiterate our call to utilize the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process as an umbrella platform at this critical time, as well as to assist post-peace stabilization efforts.

In conclusion, our support for Afghanistan is crucial to preserve and expand on the economic, social and political gains made since 2002. The role assumed by the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in the process will continue to be central. Turkey remains committed to standing by the people of Afghanistan, as it has always done.

Mr. Fifield (Australia): Australia welcomes the ongoing Afghanistan peace negotiations, and we call on all parties to embrace this opportunity to create and implement a sustainable, inclusive political settlement. We support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that preserves and builds on the political, economic and social achievements of the past 19 years. We call on both parties to conduct the negotiations in good faith, and we note that difficult compromises may be needed to see a successful conclusion to the bloodshed.

We note with great concern the unacceptably high number of casualties, including among women and children, as a result of the conflict. We call on all sides to reduce the level of violence and observe a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire to create the environment necessary for the peace negotiations to progress.

We strongly encourage all parties to include Afghanistan's diverse voices, particularly those of Afghan women, throughout the negotiations. Australia continues to promote women as key agents of change and encourages their full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in Afghanistan's peace, stabilization and decision-making processes for the benefit of all Afghans.

Australia recognizes the important steps taken by Afghanistan on its development pathway, and we join the international community in supporting its continued progress towards self-reliance. At the international conference on Afghanistan last week, the international community demonstrated strong support for Afghanistan by committing \$13.5 billion in development assistance, which included Australia's pledge of up to AUS\$200 million from 2021 to 2024.

We should acknowledge the strength of that support from international partners at a time when domestic and development budgets are under considerable strain as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic. However, that financial support comes with conditions. A prerequisite for ongoing international financial assistance will be Afghanistan's commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality, as embedded in the Afghan Constitution, along with full respect for Afghanistan's international commitments.

We also expect a strong commitment by all Afghans to fight against corruption, which will ensure that critical international resources are provided to

those most in need. The prospect of peace offers a transformational opportunity, and the next few months will be critical in setting Afghanistan's course for the years ahead.

Australia remains committed to helping the Afghan people chart their course towards peace and seek a more secure and prosperous future.

Mr. Kakanur (India): I would like to begin by thanking all delegations that participated in the consultations on draft resolution A/74/L.45, in particular our German colleagues, who as usual ably facilitated the negotiation process. My delegation attaches great importance to the consensual adoption of the draft resolution, which is an important opportunity for the international community to express its solidarity for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan today is at a critical stage, and it is vital for the international community to send the right message to everyone concerned. That was the overarching principle guiding our approach to the negotiations.

Nobody seeks peace more than the Afghan people, upon whom war has been imposed for more than four decades. All opportunities for bringing about peace and stability should be welcomed. At the same time, we are also deeply concerned about the high levels of violence and condemn it in the strongest terms. It is important to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan resulting from the violence committed by the Taliban and other terrorist groups. The peace process and violence cannot go hand in hand, and we call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire.

The draft resolution also reiterates the importance of safeguarding the achievements of the past two decades, especially the gains made in democracy, social and political reforms and the rights of women and minorities.

As contiguous neighbours, India and Afghanistan share a natural historical relationship. Our strategic partnership and long-term commitment to the development of Afghanistan reflects that time-tested partnership. Since 2001, India has invested more than \$3 billion in development, reconstruction and capacity-building in Afghanistan. We recently concluded an agreement with Afghanistan for building the Shahtoot Dam, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents of Kabul city. India will also launch

phase IV of its high-impact community development projects in Afghanistan, including approximately 150 projects worth \$80 million.

To work around the artificial and political obstacles resulting from the non-permit of full transit rights to Afghanistan so that its products may reach India and Indian products may reach Afghanistan, we operationalized air-freight corridors that have seen more than 1,000 flights to date.

The draft resolution recognizes that, for peace and stability to prevail in Afghanistan, the peace process must not only be inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned but also Afghan-controlled. Solutions must come from the Afghans themselves, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be respected. There needs to be zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is important to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not used by terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country. It is also important that the international community ensure that all States deny terrorist groups sanctuary, freedom of operations, recruitment and financial material or political support and that those who do so are held accountable.

The rights of women, minorities and the vulnerable need to be protected. Respect for human rights and democracy needs to be ingrained in any framework that a future Afghanistan plans to decide for itself.

It is important for Afghanistan to have access to the high seas for a prosperous future. The international community should work towards the removal of all artificial transit barriers imposed on Afghanistan and ensure that all transit rights are guaranteed to Afghanistan under bilateral and multilateral transit agreements, without any hindrance. We are glad to note that the draft resolution calls upon States to do so.

Given our commitments to Afghanistan, we are proud to co-sponsor the draft resolution, as we have done in the past. We urge the General Assembly today to provide its full support to the Government of Afghanistan and the draft resolution.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The situation in Afghanistan is now at a critical stage. This past September saw the start of the first set of intra-Afghan negotiations, which has opened a window of opportunity for ending years of conflict and war.

China welcomes the agreement reached by the two parties a few days ago on the rules of procedure for negotiations. We hope that the two parties will consolidate that positive momentum and continue to demonstrate their constructive posture, meet each other halfway and strive for a swift and effective solution to the political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

The international community should fully respect the will of the Afghan people, create a favourable environment for smooth negotiations and ensure an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of negotiations. No outside forces should impose solutions or take the opportunity to manipulate the negotiations process for their own selfish interests. Foreign troops should be withdrawn from Afghanistan in an orderly and responsible manner. Security vacuums should be avoided so as not to harm the interests of Afghanistan and the countries of the region. Criminal acts committed by foreign troops in Afghanistan should be thoroughly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

As a close neighbour and sincere friend of Afghanistan, China has been consistent in supporting the Afghan reconciliation process through the Afghanistan Contact Group of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue. China has actively supported the peace talks and played a constructive role in helping the Afghan people realize inclusive peace and reconciliation. As always, China will continue to support, mediate and facilitate the Afghan peace and reconciliation process.

At present, Afghanistan continues to experience frequent violent attacks, and its security situation is worrisome. The international community should provide training, funding and technical support for capacity-building in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and help Afghanistan respond effectively to terrorism, cross-border crimes, drug smuggling and other threats. Through bilateral and multilateral channels, China has continued to assist Afghanistan in strengthening its counter-terrorism capacity-building, while supporting its fight against terrorism and efforts to maintain national security.

Development is the master key to solving all problems. There can be no sustainable development in Afghanistan without socioeconomic development. At the Geneva international conference on Afghanistan that was held earlier this year, President Ghani

reiterated the significance of regional cooperation and interconnectivity for the development of Afghanistan.

The international community should support Afghanistan's participation in regional cooperation and interconnectivity so as to take full advantage of Afghanistan's geographic location in order to swiftly alleviate poverty and achieve stability and prosperity. China will follow the principles of consultation, cooperation and shared benefits, continue to advance the Belt and Road Initiative with Afghanistan and make our contribution to regional economic integration and the common development of all countries.

The coronavirus disease pandemic presents a huge challenge for Afghanistan. The international community should help Afghanistan to contain the pandemic as soon as possible and advance its socioeconomic recovery. China has provided Afghanistan with several batches of anti-pandemic aid and dispatched medical experts to Afghanistan. China will continue to do what it can to help Afghanistan combat the pandemic and promote its socioeconomic development.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting to discuss the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, an important issue for the international community given the current critical stage of its transition to peace, stability and prosperity. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/75/378).

The Afghan people have made great strides towards achieving their aspiration to build State institutions to establish security and progress. Afghans require the support of the international community to safeguard those gains in order to complete the transition process and overcome numerous challenges to security, sustainable development and the economy.

We commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for its pivotal role in that regard. We also value the important role of Afghanistan's neighbouring and friendly States in coordinating and cooperating with Afghanistan, while providing humanitarian and development support and technical expertise.

With regard to draft resolution A/75/L.45, we thank the delegation of Germany for playing a leading role once again in preparing the draft resolution and managing the negotiations. We also thank the Afghan delegation and all other delegations for their efforts and participation in the consultations.

As for the content of the draft resolution, one of its most notable elements is its reference to the peace process. It welcomes the efforts of the Afghan parties to facilitate the peace talks sponsored by the State of Qatar, which will contribute to encouraging the conclusion of the extremely important peace process. As facilitators of talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, we believe that the two parties approach the peace process with a high level of wisdom and responsibility with a view to ending the conflict and achieving lasting peace.

We are proud that the State of Qatar has participated in international efforts to help our brothers in Afghanistan achieve the desired peace by playing the role of mediator with the support of friendly countries, in particular the United States, the pivotal role of which we appreciate in ensuring the success of the negotiations. Consequently, the State of Qatar co-sponsored the draft resolution, which reflects our commitment and the commitment of all Afghan parties to end the war in Afghanistan and achieve peace and stability for the benefit of the Afghan people.

The State of Qatar has remained committed to restoring security, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, in line with our established foreign policy, which attaches importance to promoting the settlement of conflicts through peaceful means and mediation. We have made important achievements through mediation, in cooperation with our international partners.

Last September, the State of Qatar hosted the Afghan peace negotiations, which constituted an important step towards achieving the desired comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan, ending violence and humanitarian suffering and attaining sustainable stability and prosperity. That was the result of continued intense efforts through the mediation undertaken most recently by the State of Qatar in order to bring the parties to the table for dialogue, including by the hosting in Doha of the Afghan dialogue conference in July of last year, in which representatives of Afghan political parties, civil society and Afghan women participated.

The launch of the Afghan peace negotiations was based on the important achievement of a peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban signed in Doha on 29 February. The agreement was the culmination of many rounds of negotiations between the two parties in Doha and constituted an important step towards ending the war and paving the way for

intra-Afghan negotiations. It also represented an additional incentive for stepping up mediation efforts.

Despite the difficulties related to coronavirus disease-related restrictions, the State of Qatar continued its mediation to encourage dialogue between the Afghan parties and was able, last summer, to reach a ceasefire during the Al-Fitr and Al-Adha holidays. There was also a successful exchange of prisoners between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. That process — it should be emphasized — will be sustained only if it is inclusive and based on the broad support and participation of all segments of Afghan society, including women, girls, young people and minorities.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar will spare no effort in cooperating with our international partners to ensure the success of the peace talks and the achievement of the desired goals. We will continue our solidarity with, and support for, the Afghan people in order to realize their aspirations for establishing peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Al Hassan (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of Oman, it is my honour to deliver this statement to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session on agenda item 39, entitled “The situation in Afghanistan”, including on its implications for international peace and security.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/75/378) and commend his efforts to support Afghanistan in restoring peace and stability and paving the way towards well-being and prosperity.

Afghanistan is known for its rich history, the courage of its people and its contribution to human civilization in that vital region of the world, which is a crossroads of peoples, nations and cultures. We commend the political agreement signed by the President of Afghanistan and the Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation. We also commend regional and international efforts to facilitate agreements on the release of all prisoners and detainees, a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and the restoration of security and stability across Afghanistan.

I would like to welcome recent achievements, including the joint statement by the United States and the Afghan Government, the United States-Taliban agreement and the agreement reached a few days ago between Afghan parties on the rules of procedure for negotiations. All those agreements aim to achieve peace

and reconciliation in Afghanistan. We hope they will provide Afghanistan with an opportunity to move into a new phase, thereby ending several years of conflict and suffering and helping Afghanistan regain its status at the international level.

We also commend the efforts made by Afghanistan’s neighbours, in particular Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and China, as well as other peace partners, including India, Qatar, Russia, Indonesia, Germany, Norway, Finland and the European Union.

We welcome the opening of crossings between Afghanistan, Pakistan and China and the interconnectedness of road and transportation networks between Afghanistan and Iran. As the representative of China stated earlier, that will greatly contribute to spurring trade and economic exchange and reducing the effects of war in Afghanistan, thereby restoring the status of Afghanistan as a hub for international trade.

Afghanistan deserves our support and solidarity, as confirmed by the international community at the 2020 Afghanistan Conference held in Geneva in November. We ask that the Afghan people and its leadership be granted the opportunity to decide their own future and achieve self-reliance, with full respect for the sovereignty, independence and unity of Afghanistan. We call on the international community and the Security Council to reconsider the international sanctions imposed on Afghanistan under resolution 1988 (2011).

There is no doubt that restoring security, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan will not be an easy task. However, we have great trust in the people of Afghanistan and their leadership. We believe that the Afghan people will be able to prioritize national interests, come together in support of their leadership, build their own civilian State and end their suffering.

In conclusion, we call on all partners and donor countries to support Afghanistan and fulfil their commitments in order to restore security, stability and peace in Afghanistan. The Afghan leadership must assume its responsibilities. The Sultanate of Oman will continue to support Afghanistan in achieving peace and stability.

Ms. Janson (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada again welcomes the opportunity to co-sponsor and vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.45, on the situation in Afghanistan.

First, we would like to thank the delegation of Germany, which once again demonstrated great skill in the negotiations over the past few weeks, especially given the unique circumstances of the pandemic.

We can all agree on the turmoil seen over the past year in Afghanistan in particular, and also around the world. The coronavirus disease crisis underscores more than ever the need for international cooperation and solidarity in addressing cross-border challenges. At the same time, 2020 has given us new hope for peace, with the much-anticipated launch of negotiations between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. But there too, cooperation among partner States will be essential in supporting the peace process. It is therefore regrettable that the draft resolution cannot be adopted by consensus for the third year in a row.

(spoke in English)

The draft resolution highlights the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to respond to the new challenges and the significant concessions it made to reach the negotiating table. We applaud the Government for seizing that historic opportunity for peace and stability in Afghanistan. It takes courage to negotiate in good faith amid the highly concerning levels of violence, mainly caused by the Taliban. Canada reiterates its deep concern at the high number of civilian casualties and targeted killings and calls for all Afghan parties to achieve a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire to end the conflict in Afghanistan.

The draft resolution also stresses the crucial importance of protecting the gains of the past 19 years, notably in the area of human rights, in particular the human rights of women, children and minorities. An agreement that does not bring peace to all members of society, women and men, all ethnicities and all religions, will not lead to durable peace. Canada also strongly supports references to the meaningful participation of women in the peace process, while also noting the critical urgency of eradicating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

As highlighted in the draft resolution, we all need to continue our efforts. Canada was proud to reaffirm our commitment to Afghanistan at the conference held in Geneva on 24 November. We are also particularly appreciative of the outstanding efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan in fostering international consensus. This is a critical moment for the international community to

work together and reinforce its support for the people of Afghanistan.

Ms. Juul (Norway): First, allow me to commend Germany for its leadership on draft resolution A/75/L.45, which was negotiated against a complex backdrop and under challenging circumstances.

In the midst of a global pandemic, 2020 is also the year that sparked a glimmer of hope for an end to more than four decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Norway welcomes the announcement by the two Afghan negotiating sides in Doha on 2 December that they have adopted rules of procedure and have moved on to discuss the draft agenda. That represents an important step in a process that must have at its endpoint a durable and inclusive peace settlement in Afghanistan. We also commend Qatar's key role in hosting and facilitating that phase of negotiations and that important breakthrough.

Building on the important milestone of 2 December, we encourage both sides to continue to engage with each other in good faith with a constructive spirit and ready to find common ground. We also urge both sides to give priority to ending the ongoing violence, which is unacceptable. Norway unreservedly condemns all acts of terrorism, and we support the Secretary-General's appeal for a global humanitarian ceasefire.

Experience teaches us that inclusive peace agreements are more likely to succeed in the long run. We see the participation of women in all aspects of the peace and security process, including at the negotiating table, as crucial in that respect. The peace negotiations should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. The international community stands ready to offer whatever support the parties may wish. Afghanistan's neighbours play a vital role in securing peace, stability and prosperity. Integrating Afghanistan into the regional economy will be a major contribution towards poverty eradication.

We reiterate our support for a political settlement that protects the rights of all Afghans, including women, young people and minorities — a settlement that sustains and builds on the economic, social, political and development gains achieved since 2001.

The recent donors conference sent a clear message from the international community that Afghanistan is expected to continue strengthening its democracy, rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights. Efforts to combat corruption must also be redoubled. Norway

will continue to provide humanitarian assistance and watch closely how the coronavirus disease pandemic continues to evolve and affect Afghanistan.

The protection of civilians needs to be one of our main priorities. Particular attention should be given to the protection of children and young people, including the protection of schools from attack. It is essential that humanitarian actors obtain safe and unhindered access to people who are in need of life-saving assistance and protection. We must also ensure that efforts to prevent violent extremism do not undermine human rights or impede the ability of civil society, including women's groups, to operate effectively.

On 1 January, Norway will take a seat as an elected member of the Security Council. We will do our utmost to support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to ensure that the Council supports Afghanistan's peace and development processes.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan and Afghanistan are linked by the unbreakable bonds of geography, history, culture ethnicity and faith. Our destinies are intertwined. Afghanistan has endured endless conflict and suffering for the past 40 years. We have shared their trials and tribulations; we hope to share their joy when peace returns to Afghanistan.

A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is indispensable for peace and stability in the region and beyond. Prime Minister Imran Khan has maintained for years that the conflict in Afghanistan can be ended, not by military force but through a political settlement that involves the full spectrum of Afghanistan's political landscape. We are gratified that position now reflects the international consensus.

To help turn that consensus into reality, and as a shared responsibility, Pakistan has facilitated the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. The commencement of the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha on 12 September has rekindled hope for peace through a comprehensive political settlement. It is only through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that a comprehensive, inclusive, negotiated political settlement can be achieved.

Arriving at that inflection point has been an accomplishment, and that success belongs first and foremost to the Afghans. Pakistan has worked with

the international community and our Afghan brothers and sisters on the path to peace, while encouraging a reduction in violence and urging dialogue and negotiations. The commencement of intra-Afghan negotiations is the outcome of our combined efforts. It is now up to Afghan leaders to seize this historic opportunity, work together constructively and secure an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. It is the Afghans who must be the owners of their destiny and decide their own future without outside influence or interference.

Pakistan welcomes the recent agreement on rules and procedures reached by the Afghan parties in Doha, which reflects the common resolve of the Afghan parties to secure a negotiated settlement. It is a significant step towards the successful outcome of the intra-Afghan negotiations. Pakistan will continue to support those negotiations and looks forward to an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political solution that paves the way for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's neighbours and the international community must respect the will of the Afghan people, as expressed through such Afghan-led and Afghan-owned negotiations. Spoilers from within or without must not be allowed to subvert the success of those negotiations and prevent a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan; such machinations must be defeated. We hope that, despite multiple challenges and possible periodic setbacks, all Afghan parties will persevere in the pursuit of a political settlement.

Terrorism has had a devastating impact on Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries. We share the determination of the international community not to allow Afghanistan's territory to be used by Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant or other international terrorist groups and their affiliates to threaten or attack any country. Pakistan also shares international concerns about the continuing high level of violence and escalating civilian casualties in Afghanistan. We call on all parties to the Afghan conflict to take urgent steps to reduce the level of violence with a view to the eventual cessation of hostilities.

Bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan has intensified. Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Kabul last month at the invitation of President Ghani. Earlier, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah visited Islamabad at the invitation of our Prime Minister.

During the Prime Minister's visit to Kabul, the leaders agreed on a shared vision to support peace and stability in both countries and the wider region.

Time-bound actions have been agreed to further enhance intelligence cooperation, refugee repatriation and regional connectivity. Pakistan will continue to manifest its solidarity with the people of Afghanistan. While the world was closing borders during the coronavirus disease crisis, Pakistan opened five border crossings with Afghanistan. We revised our visa policy to facilitate visits by our Afghan brethren and donated medical equipment to help them fight the pandemic.

To foster and sustain peace, Afghanistan will continue to need generous international economic support and cooperation. It will also need support for the return of Afghan refugees in dignity and honour. We trust that such international support will be manifested at the upcoming Afghanistan Conference to be held in Geneva. Pakistan has committed \$1 billion to Afghanistan's development, half of which has been utilized for infrastructure and capacity-building projects.

At this moment of hope, I assure our Afghan brethren that Pakistan will always support a peaceful, stable, united, democratic, prosperous and sovereign Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Mr. Kinna (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is pleased to participate in today's debate on Afghanistan. Before I start, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Germany for introducing draft resolution A/75/L.45 and for his team's able stewardship of the negotiations.

I would also like to thank Afghanistan and all other delegations that participated in the negotiations. At an important moment for Afghanistan, the draft resolution serves to underscore the international community's support for Afghanistan and for a fully inclusive political settlement that delivers lasting peace and stability. We are pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Today I want to speak about three key issues — the next stage of the Afghan peace negotiations, the urgent need to reduce violence with a view to establishing a comprehensive ceasefire and the need for sustained international support for Afghanistan.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent agreement between the negotiating teams of the Islamic

Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban on the rules and procedures for Afghanistan peace negotiations. We also welcome the holding of the first meeting of the leadership committee of the High Council for National Reconciliation. There is still a long way to go, but those first steps show that all sides are able to work together in the pursuit of lasting peace. We urge both negotiating teams to continue that positive momentum and agree on an agenda for substantive talks.

Let us be under no illusion. The road to peace will be immensely challenging, will mean making difficult decisions and will require compromises on all sides — but there is no alternative. The current peace talks represent a historic opportunity to end decades of debilitating conflict by negotiating towards a political road map for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan for all Afghans. A meaningful peace must ensure that terrorists are no longer able to use Afghanistan to attack Afghans and the international community.

A meaningful peace must also safeguard and build on the universal human rights of all the Afghan people — including and particularly women, young people and minority groups — and it must also uphold the rule of law. Through our co-chairing of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, the United Kingdom has been a strong advocate for female participation and leadership at all levels in the peace process. Women's involvement is essential to sustainable peace. The voices of Afghan women on all issues must be heard, and we will continue to support them.

Secondly, the single-biggest obstacle to peace is the current level of violence. That must stop. Violence, especially violence driven by Taliban attacks, continues to kill and maim. Just today we witnessed the senseless murder of journalist Malalai Maiwand, which the United Kingdom has condemned. Such violence not only claims innocent lives but also frustrates the peace talks.

The United Kingdom calls for an immediate and significant reduction of violence and the negotiation of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. Demonstrating a genuine commitment to peace includes demonstrating a commitment to putting down arms. Talks will take time, but the Afghan people should be able to feel the benefits of peace talks right away.

Finally, while the peace process must be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led, it is vital that the international community remain steadfast in its support for

Afghanistan. Indeed, the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic this year makes that all the more vital.

For our part, the United Kingdom remains a committed supporter of Afghanistan and its people. At the recent 2020 Afghanistan Conference in Geneva, we announced up to \$207 million of further development funding for 2021. The United Kingdom has also pledged up to \$93 million for the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces for 2021. That support, together with Afghanistan's own pursuit of the commitments made in the Afghanistan Partnership Framework, will help give peace the best chance to succeed.

Indeed, 2020 has been a year of immense challenge for Afghanistan, but with the start of peace talks the prospects for 2021 and beyond can be much brighter. We urge all parties to seize this historic opportunity for peace and promise that the United Kingdom will continue to stand with Afghanistan on its path towards a more peaceful and prosperous future.

Ms. Handaruningrum (Indonesia): The momentum for Afghanistan to embark on a new journey is finally here. The formal negotiations, which began in Doha in September, hold the promise to realize the reconciliation and peace for which the people of Afghanistan have so long yearned.

Indonesia welcomes the progress in the Afghan peace negotiations and hopes there will be further progress. It also fully supports an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. The international community must do its utmost to assist Afghanistan. That is why my delegation is here to reaffirm Indonesia's long-standing support for Afghanistan and join in adopting a draft resolution that will further advance commitments for the great future that we know awaits it.

Afghans have achieved much over the past two decades. The development and human rights gains, including for women and girls, must be preserved and built upon. Threats need to be tackled effectively. Among them, increased violence and civilian casualties cause deep concern and also weaken the trust of ordinary Afghans in the efficacy of the peace process.

Indonesia is also concerned about terrorist acts in Afghanistan. Attacks on innocent civilians and infrastructure are reprehensible and must stop. We condemn those attacks. We also deplore the continued presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and

Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, which harms the country and the region.

Against that backdrop, allow me to underscore the following.

First, a comprehensive and lasting peace in Afghanistan is in the best interests of every country. Peace and increased regional cooperation will promote the stability and development of the whole region. It will also extinguish any space for organized crime and terrorists. While we all have a vital role as peace enablers, all parties must continue to engage constructively and de-escalate towards a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. The only overriding interest must be to bring peace and well-being to the Afghan people. The relevant actors inside and outside Afghanistan should fully support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

Secondly, the international community must sustain its support for Afghanistan. We welcome the recent Geneva conference and its communiqué. Sustaining international support, including through the Afghanistan Partnership Framework, is indispensable. We also commend the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which will remain essential for the foreseeable future. Indonesia, along with Germany, has been co-penholder on Afghanistan in the Security Council. While Indonesia's term on the Council ends this month, we assure members that we will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan.

Foreign Minister Marsudi personally reinforces that support. In early March this year, she visited Kabul and launched the Afghanistan-Indonesia Women's Solidarity Network, which is intended to increase women's empowerment and the protection of women as agents of peace. The Network also represents a follow-up to a dialogue between Afghan and Indonesian women on the role of women in building and sustaining peace, which was hosted by Indonesia in November last year.

The Foreign Minister of Indonesia is also a strong supporter of women's participation in the peace process and gladly joined the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan as an honorary member. Indonesia also participates in the Afghan peace negotiations as a member of the host country support group.

Thirdly, the inclusive participation of all Afghans in nation-building is pertinent. We reiterate that it

is important for all Afghan citizens, religions and ethnicities, including women and young people, to contribute to their country's reconstruction and development. Their diversity and inclusivity will build the collective national vision that is fundamental for sustaining peace. The peace process should therefore ensure the rights, safety and development of all the people of Afghanistan.

Let me conclude by quoting Albert Camus — “peace is the only battle worth waging”. Indonesia will do its part to support peace and development in Afghanistan. We are also pleased to co-sponsor and support draft resolution A/75/L.45 and wish to thank Germany and its team for facilitating it.

Ms. Atiqa Md Akim (Malaysia): Malaysia is pleased to co-sponsor and support draft resolution A/75/L. 45, entitled “The situation in Afghanistan”. In particular, we are pleased to see the inclusion in the eleventh preambular paragraph of a reference to the call for a global ceasefire.

We continue to call on all relevant parties to implement an immediate, permanent and comprehensive ceasefire in Afghanistan, without any precondition, in line with the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, as supported by Security Council resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2543 (2020) and the statement of support that was co-initiated by Malaysia and endorsed in June by 170 States Members of the United Nations, one non-member observer State and one observer.

Malaysia reiterates its support for the efforts of the Afghan Government to advance the peace and reconciliation process while respecting its Constitution, democracy and the rights of all Afghan people. We reaffirm that an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that involves all parts of Afghan society is the only path towards a sustainable resolution of the conflict.

Ms. Shaheen (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude for the holding of this important meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. We hope that draft resolution A/75/L.45, which reflects continued international efforts to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan and end the long suffering of the Afghan people, will be adopted.

This important debate follows the convening the 2020 Afghanistan Conference in Geneva, which contributed to a recommitment to the common goals of

ensuring sustainable development, stability, prosperity and peace in Afghanistan.

Nearly three years have passed since the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Republic of Afghanistan became a martyr — he was killed along with five humanitarian workers from my country and several Afghan civilians during a terrorist attack in Kandahar in January 2017. At that time, a team from the United Arab Emirates was in the process of implementing a number of humanitarian, educational and developmental projects in Afghanistan. That incident reminds us that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Combating terrorism requires international joint responsibility.

My country will therefore continue to work with regional and international partners to combat terrorism. We reiterate our call to the international community to continue to support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in combating terrorism and to ensure that it remains a top priority for various countries amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The United Arab Emirates remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in many fields. For example, we trained more than 20,000 imams in rural Afghanistan on the promotion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. We also joined the United Nations Group of Friends of the Victims of Terrorism, established by Afghanistan and Spain, in order to demonstrate our solidarity with the victims of terrorism and defend their rights.

My country will continue its endeavours to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan by joining NATO efforts in Afghanistan, including through our participation since 2003 in the International Security Assistance Force, which contributes to security and social development activities.

With regard to developmental and humanitarian aid, my country stresses the need to continue to provide Afghanistan with developmental and humanitarian assistance. The United Arab Emirates to that end contributed more than \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and developmental assistance to Afghanistan and provided it with medical supplies to support its health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

My country also participated in a demining project in Kandahar from 2011 to 2013, to which we allocated nearly \$27 million, which resulted in the clearing of

more than 72 minefields to enable local residents to enjoy access to basic services, schools and public facilities.

The United Arab Emirates also helped the people of Afghanistan to realize their quest for peace, stability and prosperity in all areas, especially with respect to enabling women and girls in Afghanistan. It cooperated with UN-Women to train more than 20 Afghan women as part of an initiative of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak that provided female trainees with skills and capacities in the field of peacebuilding. By joining the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, my country seeks to support partnership efforts within civil society and the private sector in Afghanistan in order to meet the needs and address the challenges of Afghan women.

In accordance with the policy of the United Arab Emirates, which seeks to ensure respect for the human rights of people from war-affected and disaster-affected countries, we continue to work in all international and regional forums and urge countries hosting Afghan refugees not to exploit them in regional issues and conflicts that do not concern them, which is a violation of international law. We also call for respecting the rights of refugees while providing them with a decent life.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Afghanistan is at a critical juncture and, in order to build a better future for its citizens, it needs strong international support. Today we will vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.45, on the situation in Afghanistan, in which the General Assembly sends a strong message of support to the people and the Government of Afghanistan in their endeavour to build a more stable, prosperous and democratic country.

Only an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process can resolve the current conflict in Afghanistan. It must build upon and promote past achievements, including the current Constitution, while combating terrorism and respecting the right of the Afghan people to self-determination by holding elections and preserving the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and women. From that perspective, we welcome the General Assembly's call for the preservation of Afghanistan's Constitution and its rejection of the restoration of the Islamic Emirate.

We commend the positive approach of Afghanistan's Government to the peace talks. The Taliban should also demonstrate the same level of determination and good faith, including by halting its attacks against the Afghan

National Defence and Security Forces. Moreover, all external actors must avoid interfering in the peace talks, which must be facilitated by the United Nations. We welcome in that context the call by the Assembly for the further engagement of the United Nations in the peace process.

While welcoming the progress made so far in the talks, we will also continue to work in coordination with the United Nations to play a more active role in contributing to their success. A durable peace in Afghanistan should not be imposed from outside, and the peace talks should not be expected to resolve decades-old problems overnight. There is a need for flexibility and patience on all sides, while placing the interests of the people of Afghanistan above all other interests, including those of a specific group. In a multi-ethnic and diverse society such as that of Afghanistan, no single group, party or faction, including the Taliban, can claim to hold power by itself alone.

Despite the initiation of the peace talks, Afghanistan's security situation remains a source of concern, since attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including educational centres and diplomatic premises, are on the rise. We strongly condemn all such attacks, most of which are perpetrated by terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh, elements of which are still being transferred from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.

While the presence and activities of Da'esh present a serious threat to the security of Afghanistan and the region, it is unfortunate that, due to the objection of some Western countries, it was not possible to include in the draft resolution a stand-alone paragraph on the threats emanating from Da'esh in Afghanistan. Our genuine support for the draft resolution must not be construed as an acknowledgment of our support for the continued presence or activities of foreign forces in Afghanistan.

However, while many countries have stressed that the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan must not lead to a security vacuum, it is also regrettable that — again due to the objection of some Western countries — a call for the orderly and responsible withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan was not included in the draft resolution. A smooth and effective assumption of the duties of foreign forces by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces will be a positive step towards a sustainable peace.

Accordingly, both prior to and simultaneous with the withdrawal of foreign forces, every effort should be made to support and strengthen Afghanistan's military and security forces.

Along with such efforts, effective assistance must be extended to Afghanistan in combating the illicit production of, and trafficking in, narcotic drugs as a source of financing terrorism and other crimes. For our part, over the past 40 years, we have played an active role in combating drug trafficking in the region, in which nearly 4,000 members of Iran's law enforcement forces have been martyred and more than 2,000 others wounded. Our outstanding activities in that regard have always been acknowledged at the global level.

According to the *World Drugs Report 2020* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Iran stands far out at the top of the list of countries that seized the largest quantities of opiates in 2018, accounting for 53 per cent of the global total. The international community should not allow extremists, terrorists and drug traffickers to use the current economic situation in Afghanistan to promote their dangerous and heinous agenda. There is therefore a need for sustained and increased international support for the economic development of Afghanistan.

In that context, in addition to hosting and supporting more than 3 million Afghans, including through the provision of health services during the pandemic, and despite the savage economic war being waged by the United States against our people, we have continued to promote economic cooperation with Afghanistan, such as by providing it with electricity.

In order to help Afghanistan as a landlocked country to overcome related difficulties, further development of the Chabahar port has been on our agenda for the past couple of years. Through ongoing cooperation between the two countries, we also inaugurated the Khaf-Herat railway, which connects Afghanistan's railway to Europe through Iran. All that bilateral economic cooperation is taking place in the face of the illegal economic terrorism of the United States, which targets Iranians and Afghans alike. The Islamic Republic of Iran is nevertheless determined to strengthen its bilateral relations with, and support for, the fraternal people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 39.

We will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.45.

Before giving the floor to the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): The United States would like to note that draft resolution A/75/L.45 comes at a critical time in the ongoing negotiations and must be based on a shared commitment to supporting the Afghanistan peace negotiations in the pursuit of an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led resolution to decades of conflict.

When the Taliban signed the 29 February agreement to enter into negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, it publicly and explicitly agreed to prevent Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups from using the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies. The Taliban recognized the legitimate concerns about international terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and agreed to prevent international terrorist groups from recruiting, training or fundraising and that the Taliban would not host them. Although the Taliban still has more to do, those commitments and the actions taken since are a significant step forward.

The United States regrets that progress is not fully reflected in the draft resolution, which fails to recognize the distinction between the activities of the Taliban and those of international terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Shams (ISIS) and Al-Qaida. The Taliban has fought ISIS-Khorasan Province and taken other steps on its counter-terrorism commitments. The United States has raised those concerns with the penholder, Germany.

The level of violence perpetrated by all sides in Afghanistan is too high, and we must seize the current moment to accelerate the peace process and alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people. That means that our assessment of the situation on the ground cannot be on autopilot. The recent agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban on the rules of procedure for talks and the start of the discussion on agenda items demonstrate that both sides are engaged seriously and capable of coming to agreement on tough issues.

As the Afghanistan peace negotiations proceed to the next critical phase, it is important that the international community acknowledge the significant progress made to date, while pressing both sides to work together with the urgency required to achieve a political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. The time has come for Afghans to unify and embrace compromise, not to polarize each other. The international community should also unify in support of the peace process.

Finally, with respect to the climate change language, we note that the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change took effect on 4 November. Therefore, references to climate change are without prejudice to the positions of the United States.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.45, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/75/L.45 and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.45: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mali, Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, Norway, Oman, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan on a point of order.

Mrs. Raz (Afghanistan): I take the floor to raise a point of order under rule 88 of the rules of procedure.

My delegation would like to express its deep regret that a vote has been requested for draft resolution A/75/L.45, on the situation in Afghanistan. It is very

unfortunate that, despite the efforts made by the facilitator to address the concerns of all delegations in a balanced manner and despite Afghanistan's strong support, the draft resolution did not attain consensus.

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the draft resolution effectively reflects updates and developments on the ground, in particular the progress made to date in the peace process. We strongly support the eighth preambular paragraph and paragraph 42, which are based on the facts on the ground. Paragraph 19, on peace and reconciliation, welcomes the steps taken by the Taliban and its commitment to pursuing the negotiation of an inclusive political settlement. The Taliban continues to engage in violent and terrorist activities that directly target civilians, and it maintains contact with terrorist organizations, specifically Al-Qaida.

It is the genuine intent of the Government of Afghanistan, our friends, neighbours and the General Assembly to incorporate the Taliban as a political party. It is in the interests of no Afghan for fellow Afghans to be listed as terrorists. It is our utmost desire and wish to see the Taliban as a constructive political party in the country, without a relationship with Al-Qaida or other terrorist groups and working for prosperity and peace in Afghanistan.

However, according to the recent report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, the Taliban maintains ties with terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida, and almost all members of the Assembly have included the Taliban in their domestic terrorist listings.

It is my people's wish and the Government's aim at the negotiating table and in the peace talks to help the Taliban to become a party we can trust, but that is not the reality today. We are of the view that the language of the draft resolution provides a balanced text that notes positive trends in the Taliban's willingness to take firm steps towards peace and reconciliation. However, we believe that the draft resolution and other documents by the United Nations must remain unequivocal on the current standing of the group and its violence and terrorist activities for as long as it continues to engage with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups.

Afghanistan strongly believes that the request for a vote will not affect the absolute support of the States Members of the United Nations for our common objective of attaining peace, prosperity and stability. Throughout all stages of the negotiation process, Afghanistan engaged in constructive discussion, in good faith and with a willingness to compromise, in order to accommodate realistic proposals that align with the needs and priorities of the Afghan Government and people, according to the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

I stand before the Assembly today as the representative of a democratic and sovereign State. I therefore represent the desires and wishes of my nation, the hopes of our women, the determination of our young people, the call of our minorities and the realities of the new Afghanistan. As my country's representative, I strongly believe and am fully convinced that the draft resolution before us represents the best interests of people of Afghanistan. It will be disappointing if some think otherwise.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the German delegation for its tireless efforts to find the right balance in the text and to acknowledge the cooperative spirit of all the other Member States that were able and willing to find compromise.

We call on all Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution, while keeping in mind the long-standing support of the General Assembly, its members and the international community for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy,

Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstaining:

Belarus, China, Pakistan

Draft resolution A/75/L.45 was adopted by 130 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions (resolution 75/90).

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation places particular importance on the consideration by the General Assembly of the situation in Afghanistan. Traditionally, we support the adoption of a truly consensus-based draft resolution, the text of which not only takes into account current events but also reflects the consolidated approaches taken by the international community towards an effective and lasting settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

The unity of all Afghan partners is particularly crucial today against the backdrop of the intra-Afghan negotiations now under way. Regrettably, for the third year in a row, during the consultations prior to the adoption of resolution 75/90 we found the opposite to be true — specifically, we observed the brazen disregard of the facilitators for the concerns of the States of the region and the repeated attempts by certain delegations to impose a view of the situation that was out of touch with reality.

That is consistent with information emerging on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Such actions represent clear attempts to disregard the obvious — that the continued presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and illicit drugs issues pose a threat to the security of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and neighbouring Central Asian States. That is all taking place in the context of an increasing number of terrorist attacks by ISIL and the blocking of the most recent report on the opium survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We believe that to be an attempt to conceal the true scope of those threats.

It is frustrating to see the facilitators blatantly ignoring the efforts of the States directly involved in securing a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan and underestimating the role of regional organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, as well as the importance of regional initiatives. Russia is working to ensure that all Afghan political authorities and key external players act in a unified manner based on a single set of rules. The efforts of the Russia-China-United States of America troika, plus Pakistan, are also aimed at promoting a peace process led by Afghans themselves.

We are convinced that Member States would have been fully able to reach consensus while negotiating the draft resolution if the process had been transparent and objective and if the facilitators had been impartial. However, the working methods used by the German delegation are beneath all criticism. What we saw was the imposition of a pre-established and biased approach favouring one group of States that blatantly ignored the proposals supported by the majority of the States of the region, together with a forced vote on a document that clearly does not enjoy consensus.

Under those conditions, we had no other choice but to request a vote on draft resolution A/75/L.45 and vote against it. We are moreover of the view that Berlin should no longer fulfil the role of facilitator for Afghanistan in the General Assembly. It is clear that its methods negatively affect progress in resolving the issues facing Afghanistan.

In conclusion, we wish to stress that, despite the situation surrounding the just adopted resolution 75/90, we continue to support Afghanistan during this crucial period. Our vote against the draft resolution should be understood exclusively as an objection to the actions and working methods of the facilitators.

The Russian Federation has continued to support a fully inclusive peace process led by Afghans themselves. We will continue to support efforts to end the war and develop a peaceful, unified, independent and prosperous Afghanistan, free of terrorism and illicit drugs.

Mr. Liu Liqun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has remained a staunch supporter of the Government and the people of Afghanistan. We support the peace and reconciliation process in the country and call on the international community to make a greater investment in Afghanistan's prompt achievement of long-term peace and security.

China remained actively engaged throughout the consultations on the just adopted resolution 75/90 and, in the light of the most recent developments and the genuine needs of Afghanistan, we proposed a number of constructive amendments to the text that were met with a favourable response and the support of several Member States.

However, the text of resolution 75/90 fails to fully reflect the important concerns of a number of Member States, and there is room for improvement in many areas. The facilitator ended the consultations too early, against the counsel of the various parties, which led to the text being put to a vote. China finds that deeply regrettable. The facilitator and a few countries also refused to retain the consensus language in the paragraphs on regional cooperation and the fight against the coronavirus disease, which is not a constructive approach.

For those reasons, China had no choice but to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution. We hope that in future the facilitator will communicate with Member States in a more responsible and constructive

manner and fully respect the legitimate concerns of all parties in the interest of unity among Member States. China will continue to work with other countries to make fresh contributions to the achievement of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): The policies of the Republic of Uzbekistan towards Afghanistan reflect a traditional stance, based on our position that the establishment of a durable peace in the neighbouring country of Afghanistan is an important prerequisite for the stability and prosperity of the whole of Central Asia. From the perspective of Uzbekistan, the development and practical implementation of a unified, comprehensive peace programme for Afghanistan, supported at the regional and global levels, is the key condition for advancing peace.

We support the notion that the peace process should encompass all political forces and ethnic groups in the country and should be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. We believe that the current intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha should become an important stage for advancing the overall process towards a political settlement to the situation in Afghanistan. Therefore, Uzbekistan supported resolution 75/90 and calls on all Member States to continue to make efforts that are conducive to supporting and furthering the intra-Afghan peace talks.

Mr. Usman (Pakistan): Pakistan would like to express its disappointment with resolution 75/90, which omitted certain important issues that have traditionally been reflected in previous resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan, such as the objective of regional cooperation, the gravity of the terrorism threat and the dangers arising from illicit drug production.

Pakistan is also disappointed that the important negotiating platform that played a critical role in the commencement of the intra-Afghan dialogue, in particular the Russia-China-United States of America troika plus Pakistan format, was not reflected in the resolution. Regional projects play a crucial role in the economic development of Afghanistan and of the entire region. The omission of important references to recent regional initiatives by the principal sponsor of the resolution is inexplicable.

Finally, the resolution does not adequately reflect developments relating to the intra-Afghan peace process. The parties opened the intra-Afghan negotiations a few days ago and agreed on the rules and procedures for those negotiations. It will be difficult to make progress

in the negotiations if one of the parties at the table is depicted as a terrorist entity. The aim of the resolution and the General Assembly should be to facilitate the negotiation process, and not to impede it. For those reasons, and despite its concurrence with most of the provisions of the resolution, Pakistan was obliged to abstain in the voting. We believe that consensus on the resolution would have been achieved if the facilitator had been more accommodating.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

Before giving the floor to speakers in the exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): As Germany has been mentioned specifically, I would like to exercise the right of reply.

My United States colleague said in his intervention that we had worked on autopilot with respect to resolution 75/90. I would like to reject that; Germany did not work on autopilot. We held close to a record number of consultations, which I described in my first intervention. I would also like to ask the representative of the United States to review the record of today's meeting and the statements of the many speakers who praised the way Germany facilitated the process.

I would also like to respond to the accusations made by the representative of Russia and others.

First, I would like to ask the representatives if they actually read the resolution, because large parts of it concern the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and it expresses concern is several parts that the territory of Afghanistan should not be used by ISIL to threaten to attack any country.

Secondly, regional cooperation is covered and highlighted in several parts of the resolution. However, not each and every initiative is mentioned. Germany has been one of the driving forces of the peace process in Afghanistan for years, yet we do not make specific mention of our efforts. I also wonder if colleagues read the whole text; there is a whole paragraph on illicit drugs and their dangers.

Resolution 75/90 was just adopted by an overwhelming majority — 130 countries voted in favour and one country voted against it, while three countries abstained in the voting. That sends a very strong message from the General Assembly to the people of Afghanistan. The General Assembly stands behind the Afghan people in a very difficult period for the country. I very much regret that, for the first time since we began to vote on the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, Russia voted against it.

We heard the plea of the Ambassador of Afghanistan to vote in favour of the draft resolution to send a strong message of support to the Afghan people. Despite that repeated plea by the Ambassador of Afghanistan, who speaks on behalf of her country, Russia voted against the draft resolution. What message is Russia sending to Afghanistan? It sends the message that Russia does not stand behind the Afghan people and does not respond positively to the requests made by the Ambassador of Afghanistan. Today Russia let down the Afghan people. It let down people coping with difficult circumstances. They have to cope with continuous fighting, climate change and the coronavirus disease. They have embarked on the very difficult endeavour of the peace talks.

We all hope that all that has been achieved during the past few years in the areas of human rights, respect for women and children and peaceful development in Afghanistan will not be put in jeopardy. At this critical time, all of us should have voted in favour of the resolution to send a strong message to the Afghan people conveying that, in these difficult times, we stand behind them.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to take the floor again. I will be brief.

As the Permanent Representative of Germany called on my delegation and other delegations to carefully

read resolution 75/90, I would ask him to listen more carefully to our explanation of vote.

It would appear that our vote against the resolution came about as a result of difficulties in understanding each other's position. In our response, after the voting, we clearly stated that Russia will continue to fully support Afghanistan and the peace process in the country. We explained that our vote is due to the unconstructive position of the penholder on the resolution on Afghanistan this year.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

The President: I would like to congratulate the General Assembly on the successful conclusion of today's meeting. The people of Afghanistan deserve to live in peace, stability and prosperity. The region deserves peace, and achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan is the common desire of the entire United Nations system.

Today the General Assembly once again underlined its support to the people of Afghanistan and its path towards peace, political reconciliation and development. We are all encouraged by the statements we heard today, but we must translate our words into action. We cannot disappoint the people of Afghanistan. There is still much cause for concern, including the high levels of violence, the threat of terrorism, the unstable security situation and increasing civilian casualties. An inclusive process, in which women, young people and victims of conflict are meaningfully represented, is the one and only option. These days, we need success stories. These days, we need to prove that the United Nations system delivers. We must help the people of Afghanistan to ensure that they succeed.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.