

**Security Council**

Sixty-ninth year

*Provisional***7267**th meeting

Thursday, 18 September 2014, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Ms. Power (United States of America)

Members:

Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Chad	Mr. Gombo
Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
China	Mr. Wang Min
France	Mr. Lamek
Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/656)

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14-53855 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/656)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Kubiš, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Kabul.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/656, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: The Security Council is meeting today with the results of Afghanistan's presidential elections due to be announced within days but with no political agreement yet in place on a Government of national unity. Discussions in recent weeks stretching long into the night have brought the teams of Mr. Abdullah Abdullah and Mr. Ghani Ahmadzai close, but some vital issues still have to be bridged. The protracted deadlock deepens a crisis that has already taken a heavy political, security and economic toll on Afghanistan. That is the reason that I am once again briefing the

Security Council from Kabul, where my presence has been requested in support of efforts to achieve a final breakthrough.

There is quite simply no better way forward than a Government of national unity led by an elected President as certified by the Independent Election Commission, working in partnership with the new Chief Executive Officer. All other options are either accompanied by heavy risks or undermine the country's constitutional framework. Both candidates have previously committed to the concept of such an administration and to abiding by the election results, subject to an audit process. Agreeing on the modalities for such an administration has proved more difficult. The remaining sticking points include how best to communicate the results when supporters on both sides genuinely believe that it is their candidate who won and will accept no other result, regardless of the audit. If there is no agreement by the time of the certification of the results, new dynamics will be set in motion with the potential to trigger further uncertainty, even the risk of conflict. The time remaining is now short, and by that I mean one or two days.

A legitimate, broadly accepted political transition is needed in order to provide a robust mandate for tackling the country's many challenges, which include a burgeoning insurgency, a looming cash crunch and an expanding illicit economy, in particular one powered by narcotics. Finally, it is vital to ensure that the international community has a credible partner for sustained commitments of assistance in what remains one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world.

It was at the request of the two candidates and the Afghan authorities that the United Nations accepted a major role in support of the electoral process, even as the process itself has remained the responsibility of Afghan election management bodies. The United Nations accepted that role as a responsibility derived from the very core of its mandate to support conflict prevention. It was always understood that the Organization ran the risk of damaging its reputation. It was, however, a necessary risk. I want to underscore my appreciation for the massive support from across the United Nations family, especially the United Nations Development Programme and the Department for Political Affairs.

With the Election Commission's final adjudication session last Sunday, the supervisory role of the United Nations came to an end. Our assessment was that the audit provided a comprehensive and credible check on

the electoral process, one that was unprecedented in scale, depth and scrutiny. Significant levels of fraud were detected and eliminated. What was also confirmed was that millions of women and men had turned out to vote on 14 June in support of a peaceful, democratic transfer of power. They have eagerly waited for months for a long overdue agreement between the two leaders on establishing a Government of national unity. The serious and growing challenges that Afghanistan faces require swift agreement on, and the establishment of, such a Government.

A tactical shift in the insurgency and the involvement of international terrorist groups have given rise to attempts not merely to disrupt but also to exert control over territory across the country. With ground engagement emerging as the leading cause of civilian casualties, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. In the first eight months of 2014, civilian casualties rose by 15 per cent as compared with the same period in 2013, with 2,312 killed and 4,533 injured. Overall, 16 per cent more women and 24 per cent more children were killed and injured owing to armed conflict than during the same period in 2013.

Afghan police and army personnel are responding courageously, and I honour all the brave Afghans killed or wounded in the service of their country. Afghanistan's security institutions will require sustained support. A new administration will need to rapidly conclude mutually agreed legal frameworks to ensure the necessary planning and preparations for continuity in international assistance. The confirmation of the intent to provide ongoing support for Afghan security institutions at the NATO Summit in Wales was most welcome.

With the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force mission at the end of this year, I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize all of the nations that have contributed, as well as to pay my respects to those individuals who have been wounded and to the families of those killed.

The prolonged deadlock has also contributed to economic stagnation in Afghanistan, with a dramatic drop in Government revenues. A new administration will need to undertake urgent action to avert a cash crisis and ensure the continued smooth functioning of Government. That will require emergency support from donors. Yet it is longer-term economic and governance reforms that will be vital to improving revenues and addressing the increasing fiscal gap.

In reframing and refreshing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework ahead of the London ministerial conference planned for November, the robust engagement of the new administration will be central to ensuring clear Afghan priorities and direction. I would urge a greater focus on a pro-poor, rights-based agenda, including policies that address a burgeoning and largely untaught youth population. Mainstreaming efforts to undercut the ever-expanding narcotics economy will also be vital, including through intensified regional efforts.

Throughout my tenure I have placed particular emphasis on promoting regional cooperation centred on Afghanistan. Enhancing economic, infrastructure and security ties within the neighbourhood will be critical for Afghanistan's future sustainability and stability in a stable and prosperous region. I welcome the strong lead that China has shown in its preparations for the Tianjin Conference on the Istanbul Process/Heart of Asia initiative.

One of Afghanistan's most important and challenging relationships is with Pakistan. Under a new administration a reset may be possible in moving forward on the shared challenges of border management, economic development and counter-terrorism. A new administration may also be a chance to breathe fresh life into Afghan-led reconciliation efforts, for which the United Nations stands ready to assist.

This will be my last meeting here as Head of the Mission. It has been a challenging time to be in Afghanistan, but it has been my privilege to serve. The confidence placed in the United Nations by all parties, domestic and international, even in the midst of current events and in thinking about future peace efforts, has been inspiring. Going forward, the United Nations will continue to have an important role to play in both Afghanistan and the broader region.

I would like to thank all of the members of the Council for the support and guidance provided to me, as well as by other Member States and international partners, since I started in January 2012.

I also want to recognize my colleagues from the United Nations, in particular from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their hard work, robust counsel and genuine commitment. I especially remember my close adviser, Vadim Nazarov, and others who have paid with their lives.

The aim of all our work and that which keeps us committed in an often challenging, difficult and dangerous environment is to support the aspirations of the Afghan people for a more prosperous and secure future in a stable and united Afghanistan. It is those wishes that must be foremost at this critical juncture.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I congratulate the United States on its successful leadership of the Council this month. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and for his outstanding leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. His tireless work over the past several months has been essential as Afghanistan grapples with a challenging election period. As the end of Mr. Kubiš's tenure approaches, I wish him every success in his future endeavours. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and his team for their support of my country throughout the election process, and for the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2014/656) on the situation in Afghanistan.

On 5 April and 14 June, millions of Afghans cast their votes to elect the future leader of the country, risking their lives and defying Afghanistan's enemies to exercise their democratic rights. In doing so, they demonstrated remarkable bravery in the face of terrorism and a stalwart commitment to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. The elections marked the end of Afghanistan's transition and the beginning of the transformation decade — a moment of tremendous importance as the country emerges from over 30 years of war. For the Afghan people, the elections represented an historic opportunity to vote for hope, democracy and lasting peace.

However, despite the impressive turnout and enthusiasm of millions of Afghans, the elections have turned into a protracted, complex and even at times messy process, with many unforeseeable challenges. Disputes related to allegations of fraud in the second round and subsequent political turmoil necessitated substantial efforts to avoid a crisis. To that end, with the support of the international community, both presidential candidates signed a joint declaration on 8 August, in line with the political and technical frameworks agreed on 12 July. The declaration detailed

their unified vision for a full audit, based on agreed criteria prepared by the United Nations, and the formation of a national unity Government consistent with the Afghan Constitution.

Following the agreement, the Independent Election Commission, in close collaboration with the United Nations and the international community, carried out an audit in accordance with Afghan laws and international standards. In an exercise unprecedented in scale and complexity, the Commission evaluated every single vote cast in the run-off, from 22,828 ballot boxes and all 34 provinces. The audit was conducted under extensive national and international observation and supervision to protect the credibility and fairness of the election results. It has been an immense undertaking, involving hundreds of United Nations staff, diplomatic personnel, international and domestic observers, agents from each campaign and Afghan electoral staff. On behalf of the Government and the people of Afghanistan, I would like to express my appreciation to all domestic and international observers and staff who worked day and night to complete the audit.

We are grateful to the international community, particularly the United States and the United Nations — and namely to President Obama and Secretary John Kerry, who remained in touch with the candidates either by phone or directly by travelling to Afghanistan — as well as to Mr. Ján Kubiš and other United Nations colleagues for supporting the audit process and for their role in facilitating negotiations and cooperation between the two campaign teams. The Afghan people expect those efforts to bring a successful and prompt end to the process.

The audit has now been completed, and we await the announcement of the final results. The Afghan people are eager to move past this difficult chapter and to see a new Government start its work, in the spirit of national unity, to preserve the gains of the past decade and bring peace and prosperity to all. As President Karzai reiterated yesterday, the Afghan people urgently need to see the process come to a close and a new President and Government inaugurated.

President Hamid Karzai chaired a meeting this morning with the elders, the jihadi leaders and the heads of the chief branches of the State to discuss election issues and the negotiations between the two candidates. Participants in the meeting expressed concern over a prolonged election process and said that people have

grown restless and are worried. The meeting decided that the elders would meet with the two candidates tomorrow morning, Friday, 19 September, to help reach a quick agreement.

The past six months have been extremely challenging for the people of Afghanistan. The electoral impasse has seriously impacted the economy of the country, the security of the country and the mindset of its people. In order to ensure future stability, the following issues require the immediate focus of Afghanistan and its international partners,

First, the economic situation is increasingly dire, exacerbated by the political uncertainty surrounding the elections dispute. The past several months have seen a steep drop in economic growth, domestic revenue collection and national income, amounting to billions of dollars in losses and threatening the long-term stability of the country. The Government is doing its utmost to keep the financial stability of the country intact, but it will be difficult to resolve the impending crisis without international support.

Secondly, the security situation is worsening. The Taliban and other terrorist and violent extremist groups took advantage of the electoral impasse to destabilize the country with violence. Their use of suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices and rocket mortars in populated areas have caused a surge in casualties of civilians and security personnel, making this the deadliest period for the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan people since 2001. Cross-border shelling has further contributed to a dismal security situation and associated loss of life. While the Afghan National Security Forces have countered the majority of insurgents, and in doing so demonstrated ability, professionalism and courage, the shadow of the violence continues to loom large over Afghanistan.

Thirdly, there is a dangerous atmosphere of division and fragmentation. The political impasse has jeopardized the resounding hope and enthusiasm so prevalent on election day, and with them the Afghan people's optimism for the country's future. We have worked tirelessly over the past decade to build national consensus and unity, but over the past several months, fears of a return to the dark days of the past have reemerged. The Afghan nation would like to see humility, reason and restraint triumph over mistrust and division; only that will allow the country to build a peaceful and democratic future.

While immediate dangers require urgent focus, the successful conclusion of the election process and the formation of a new Government will allow for further progress on Afghanistan's long-term priorities and commitments. The country continues to look forward to advancing towards its goals so that it can realize sustainable peace, stability and prosperity at last. The imminent democratic transition offers an opportunity to reinvigorate efforts towards wider reform, inclusivity and the participation of all segments of Afghan society in the country's future. A new beginning will also allow for further progress on the peace and reconciliation agenda so that the armed opposition will lay down their arms and contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

At the same time, regional cooperation will remain essential, not only to peace and reconciliation, but also to stability and progress in the wider neighbourhood. Afghanistan is dedicated to strengthening bilateral and multilateral engagements to enhance development and trade and to counter terrorism, extremism and sources of instability in the region. The upcoming Istanbul Process conference in Tianjin, China, will be an important step in that regard, and we appreciate China's leadership in moving the initiative forward.

Afghanistan is committed to long-term partnerships with the international community, which will be crucial to the success of the transformation decade and beyond. We welcome the declaration of NATO in Wales earlier this month that it stands ready to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces after 2014, and its enduring commitment to the country throughout the transformation decade. Ongoing support from our international partners is of vital importance as international forces draw down and the Afghan forces take full responsibility for security throughout the country. We also look forward to enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and the donor community. The ministerial development conference to be held in London on 25 November will allow us to reaffirm and renew existing commitments as part of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and to strengthen Afghanistan's long-term partnership with the international community.

Nations are building their own future, but in today's world the international community has an important role to play in helping war-affected countries emerging from conflict. That is why we are here again today in the Council to debate the situation in Afghanistan.

After 13 years of tremendous work and substantial gains, the Afghan people yearn to live in peace and security. As we move forward, stability is paramount, not only to my country and my people, but also to the wider neighbourhood, and countries in the region have a major stake in peace and security in Afghanistan. It is crucial that the country not again become a backdrop for political rivalries, and that the region and the wider international community stand by us to support the successful end of the election process.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing this morning and recognise his instrumental and indispensable contribution to Afghanistan's transition, as well as the important role played by the entire United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) team and the wider United Nations. At this critical juncture, that role remains central. As always, I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his briefing.

Three months ago, we congratulated the Afghan people, who — despite the persistent threat of violence by terrorists and insurgents — had made clear their desire for a democratic future by voting in great numbers. The presidential candidates must now live up to the expectations of their own people. The timely, peaceful, and credible resolution of the electoral process is vital to Afghanistan's future stability and prosperity. The candidates must honour their commitments to accept the outcome of the full election audit, abide by its results and work together to form a Government of national unity. If the political impasse is not resolved promptly, Afghanistan's successful transition is at risk, and that must not happen.

UNAMA and international observers have played a vital role in supporting the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission throughout the full election audit. We commend the United Nations for the rapid deployment of more than 120 election experts. The international community acted in good faith in responding to the request from Afghanistan for international supervision of the audit, and my own country, Australia, was also pleased to support the audit, which was unprecedented in its scale and depth of scrutiny.

As we know, the formation of a new Government will clearly mark a defining point for Afghanistan. The international community is looking ahead to the framework for supporting Afghanistan beyond 2014. We welcome the recent NATO Wales Summit

Declaration on Afghanistan, which sets key markers for NATO support for Afghanistan beyond 2014, including the desirability of Security Council endorsement for the post-2014 International Security Assistance Force successor mission. Australia is ready, with our partners, to work with the new Government to cement arrangements for the international community's ongoing support for Afghanistan.

The latest Secretary General's report (S/2014/656) notes an increase in insurgent activity during the period of political impasse. We have also seen an increase in civilian casualties, the vast majority of which have been perpetrated by anti-Government forces. Recent attacks involving large numbers of fighters are a particularly worry. We are encouraged that Afghanistan's army and police have been able to respond effectively, including in the provinces. The growing capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces was also demonstrated throughout the election period. It is vital that those forces continue to develop and sustain their capabilities, particularly in provincial areas.

Australia remains committed to supporting Afghanistan's security forces and institutions, and will provide \$300 million over the next few years for that purpose. Australia also remains ready to contribute to the post-2014 NATO-led non-combat mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces. We urge the new Afghan Government to conclude the necessary legal arrangements for that mission as an immediate priority.

The implementation of the commitments and reforms agreed at the 2012 Tokyo Conference will also be critical for a stable Afghanistan, which, as we all know and have repeatedly said, is necessary for sustainable economic and social development. Afghanistan has implemented important legal reforms to combat terrorism, the financing of terrorism, money laundering and human trafficking. We recognize that Afghanistan's current economic challenges are a significant concern, and further efforts to tackle corruption and promote fiscal sustainability are an urgent priority.

It is also imperative that the incoming Administration make progress in implementing the national action plan on women, peace and security. Women's active participation in Afghanistan's political and reconciliation processes — and more primordially, recognition of and respect for their human rights — will be a critical test of whether Afghanistan can hope to

have a successful future, and whether it will continue to attract international support. We continue to urge the full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women so as to build on the gains of the last decade. We welcome progress with the action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment, and look forward to its full implementation. The incoming Government must also support a strong and independent Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.

UNAMA will continue to play a key role in support of Afghanistan beyond the transition, including through its good offices, in promoting human rights and improved governance, in donor coordination and in facilitating humanitarian assistance. It is clear the Afghan people desire a democratic and accountable government. The challenges Afghanistan faces on the road to a more peaceful and secure future are equally clear. Australia, along with the international community, is committed to supporting Afghanistan throughout that transition. We envisage doing so in close partnership with a responsive, transparent and accountable Afghan Government.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the personal contribution, leadership and empathy of Ján Kubiš as he concludes his mission, and thank him for what he has done to help Afghanistan embrace a new future. I also want to thank him for his support to Australia as pen-holder on Afghanistan in the Council, and we wish him every continued success.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for the briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/656). We would also like to thank Permanent Representative Zahir Tanin for his statement.

We share the concerns and anxieties that have been expressed in this Chamber in regard to the protracted post-electoral marathon. Today, as a friendly Afghanistan faces many challenges in various areas — security, State-building, socioeconomic and humanitarian — the fact that its long-suffering people is living in political uncertainty is an unacceptable luxury. Like all responsible members of the international community, we are carefully watching the situation unfolding around the summing up of the results of the presidential elections. We are grateful that an important milestone has been passed, the recount of the second round has taken place, and, in parallel,

contacts between the candidates on power-sharing are continuing, although not always with full success.

We note that in society and the political elite there is growing awareness of the need to form a Government of national unity. Without a political agreement between the candidates in that regard, it will not be easy for the Afghan people to move forward after so many years of exhausting war. Repeatedly, the risks of serious destabilization are growing. We would like to note, in particular, the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and its leaders in providing assistance to the Afghan people in coming out of this electoral impasse. We support the active involvement of UNAMA, together with civil society, for its work in Afghanistan. We deem it quite unacceptable that threats are being made against the staff of the Mission.

We call on the Afghan authorities to settle the post-electoral situation through peaceful means. The results of the people's choice must be announced to the people and supported by them and most political forces in Afghanistan. It is clear that resolving the issue of the future presidency is an internal matter. For our part, we are prepared to work with any leadership of Afghanistan that supports the Afghan people itself.

Afghanistan is going through one of the most complex periods for its domestic security. The report notes that fact in particular, and the prospects in that area are very unclear. Anti-Government elements, terrorists and extremists of various stripes are stepping up their activity and may prepare for a decisive surge once there is no longer a foreign military presence in the country. In that regard, we reiterate our surprise that there has been not even one mention of Al-Qaida, as if that element no longer existed in Afghanistan. We are convinced that, without an objective view of today's current state of affairs, moving forward will be very challenging.

Ignoring current activities and realities is not an option, in particular given ever increasing number of civilian casualties, in particular among women and children, including as a result of the strikes and operations of the coalition forces. In the north of the country in particular, there is an increasingly negative impact on security and stability, especially of the Central Asian region. Since we have close allies and partners, that is of great concern to us.

Adding to the uncertainty is the fact that we do not know the outcome of the attempts of the various actors to maintain a military presence in Afghanistan. We believe that any new forms of military presence should be carefully implemented, be acceptable to the entire Afghan people and leadership and be endorsed by the Security Council. In that context, we would like to remind the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) of its obligation under resolution 2120 (2013) to present to the Security Council in December a comprehensive, and not simply an inconclusive quarterly report, as we are used to, on the implementation of the mandate of ISAF handed down to it by the Security Council.

For impartial reasons, in the context of the electoral impasse, the objective of national reconciliation has been sidelined. We hope that following the completion of the electoral cycle, the new Afghan authorities will move forward with renewed energy with the key element of normalizing the situation in the country on the basis of the three well-known principles, namely, the laying down of arms by the fighters, the recognition of the Constitution of Afghanistan and the final cutting of ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations, in full compliance with the Al-Qaida and Taliban sanctions regime.

The reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continue to depict a gloomy picture of the situation with regard to drug production and illicit drug trafficking in Afghanistan. It is of concern that the United Nations has affirmed that there has been a sharp drop in the eradication of opium crops. Last year, drug trafficking netted almost \$1 billion. It is clear that a large proportion of that goes to fuelling the subversive activities of terrorist and criminal groups.

The Security Council is still considering its counter-narcotics initiative. We need to take into account the activities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in particular in that area. We should work constructively with our colleagues on the Council in order to adopt a comprehensive programme. Combating the drug problem in Afghanistan is extremely important, not only in order to prevent the increased funding of extremist and terrorist activities but also to protect the lives of our people and to prevent our young people from becoming dependent on heroin.

We will insist that the new Afghan leadership and all those that work in the country in support of Afghanistan pay more attention to the eradication of

the drug threat, which presents a great risk to peace and security not only in Afghanistan but in the region and far beyond. That fight requires collective efforts and the abandonment of double standards and various ideologies. We can no longer tolerate the upsurge in drug production that has continued for more than 10 years of foreign presence.

The countries of the region and their cooperation play an important role in the settlement of the Afghan situation. In that regard, the development of political and economic cooperation and dialogue is of particular importance. We believe that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is vital in that regard, especially since, as members or observers, Afghanistan and all its neighbours are involved. That reality was affirmed at the most recent SCO summit. Only by coordinating the efforts of the United Nations mission and international actors will we be able to ensure the sustainable development and the establishment of a self-sufficient State that is free from terrorism and drug crime.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Ján Kubiš for his extensive work at the head of UNAMA. We hope that his experience, great professionalism and leadership qualities will still be needed by the United Nations.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing. Through him, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the crucial role that it has played in support of the electoral process in recent months. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for his statement.

I associate myself with the statement to be made during this debate by the observer of the European Union.

At the most recent debate (see S/PV.7208), we in this Chamber unanimously welcomed the determination and outstanding courage of the millions of Afghan men and women who went to the polls to contribute to the future of their country in a democratic way. Today, it is crucial that the hopes placed by the people in the electoral process be heard and that the common desire for peace and stability be taken into account.

We want to believe that the candidates for the presidential election and their supporters will be able to meet the challenge. More than ever, we call on them to

exercise restraint in their statements and their actions and to make the interests of the Afghan people their main priority. Specifically, we expect them, as they have committed to doing, to accept the election results and to form a national unity Government. There is no other realistic way.

The national unity Government, once formed, will face significant challenges. One of those is security. In that area, the new administration must quickly make decisions. In particular, it will be important to move forward as quickly as possible in the establishment of the legal frameworks necessary for the deployment of future international assistance missions to the Afghan National Security Forces. For its part, NATO once again reiterated its firm commitment to supporting the Afghan security forces beyond 2014 at the summit in Newport at the beginning of this month.

Another challenge for Afghanistan is the economy and the fight against poverty. The implementation of economic reforms and close cooperation with its regional partners will be essential to reviving the economy and to improving the living standards of Afghans.

A stable and prosperous society also rests on the rule of law and human rights. In those areas, it is important to recognize the progress made by Afghanistan over the past decade without, however, losing sight of the extent of the outstanding problems, in particular, that of the status of women. In that respect, we urge the next government to spare no effort to effectively implement the law on the elimination of violence against women. We advocate the improvement of women's rights in Afghanistan as one of its priorities.

With regard to the protection of children's rights, we welcome the agreement reached on 23 July on the road map to accelerate the implementation of the action plan against the recruitment and the use of children in the Afghan National Security Forces. We encourage UNAMA to keep the Security Council informed, through its periodic reports, on the progress made by the Afghan Government in the implementation of the road map.

As we see in many conflicts, intensified fighting is often associated with an increase in the number of civilian casualties. That axiom is unfortunately true also in Afghanistan. The civilian population continues to bear the brunt of the conflict. Women and children are paying a very heavy price, as the Special Representative

reminded us. We are appalled by the significant increase of 24 per cent in the number of civilian casualties in the first half of 2014 as compared to the same period in 2013. Anti-Government forces are responsible for three quarters of those civilian casualties. We want to recall here that the parties to the conflict are obliged to distinguish between civilians and combatants.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to the staff of UNAMA for their unwavering commitment in difficult conditions. It is essential that UNAMA get the support needed to continue its work alongside the Afghan people.

Echoing other colleagues, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ján Kubiš for the professionalism and remarkable skill with which he has fulfilled his mandate as Head of UNAMA at a crucial time for the Afghan transition. Through his work, he has embodied the principles and values of the United Nations. We warmly thank him for that and wish every success to his deputy, Nicholas Haysom, who will succeed him on 1 November.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and the representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, for their statements.

As Mr. Kubiš recalled a moment ago, Afghanistan has just experienced an intense phase of electoral activity. Despite the threats and violence, many voters went to the polls, showing their desire to contribute to Afghanistan's democratic future.

We understand that discussions are ongoing between the two main candidates on the formation of a national unity Government, and we hope that those talks will lead very quickly to a compromise that is acceptable to all, in the interests of the country and the Afghan people. It is crucial that the new Government be able to get to work as soon as possible. The election audit, which was conducted under the supervision of the United Nations, with many international observers participating, was recently completed. We hope that the election results will be published soon.

Beyond the political process, the signs pointing to a stabilization in the situation in Afghanistan are somewhat encouraging, but many challenges remain.

Security remains a particular challenge. Violence is still very much a reality in the country. The recent attacks against civilians, Afghan security forces or the

staff of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are of particular concern. Those incidents show the insurgency's desire, at a time when the international community is developing its presence in the country, to lead Afghans and their partners to doubt the robustness of the progress achieved.

We must not waver in the face of such attempts at intimidation. While Afghanistan is in transition, the support and efforts of regional partners will be crucial. The next ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process must be an opportunity to move in that direction.

It is clear that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will now be at the forefront of the international community's involvement. As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2014/656), UNAMA has already begun to take on that role, as the transition away from ISAF has entered its final phase. In particular, it plays a central role in the electoral crisis, which we recognize today.

In future, UNAMA will be in a more central, but also more complex, position. The Special Representative must, through his good offices, embody the international community in his dialogue with the Afghan political authorities. The Mission's mandate should clearly identify its priority tasks and consolidate its successes, including the protection of human rights. To provide the best support to the new Government in strengthening Afghan sovereignty, support for the consolidation of the rule of law and democratic governance must be the first priority in the Mission's mandate.

UNAMA's mandate must also take into account the major challenges for the country's stability. In that regard, the emergence of an illicit economy linked to drug trafficking will be a point of particular attention insofar as it is a significant destabilizing factor in the country, in terms of not only corruption and security but also public health and development. We believe that the fight against drug trafficking must be a central element of the political dialogue between UNAMA and the Afghan authorities without prejudice to the work of other United Nations entities in Afghanistan, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In that regard, I would like to recall that France, along with Russia, is also one of the originators of the Paris Pact, which is the primary multilateral framework for projects related to the fight against heroin trafficking from Afghanistan. Phase IV of the Pact was adopted in

March 2013 and covers programmes of action for the period 2013 to 2016, which are focused in particular on the fight against illicit financial flows from trafficking and on strengthening regional cooperation.

In conclusion, I too would like to pay tribute to the work of Mr. Kubiš and, beyond him, to all of the staff of UNAMA, who are working in very difficult conditions in Afghanistan. They have brought the United Nations work in Afghanistan to a level of excellence that does credit to the Organization. We believe that the United Nations and UNAMA will have a major role to play in Afghanistan in the coming years under the leadership of Nick Haysom, and we welcome the fact that he will assume that role shortly.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing. We appreciate his dedicated work in Afghanistan as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

Afghanistan is facing a critical moment on its path towards democracy and stability. The Afghan people showed their courage and determination to have a peaceful, democratic transition of leadership in the two rounds of presidential elections.

However, the prolonged electoral process continues to affect the political and economic uncertainty of Afghanistan and the efforts to tackle the multitude of challenges it faces. The full audit of the vote was completed by the Afghan Independent Election Commission, supported by UNAMA and global electoral observers. As we anticipate its final results shortly, it is imperative that the two candidates abide by the result of the audit. At the same time, we urge the two presidential candidates to conclude an agreement regarding the formation of a Government of national unity in accordance with their commitments of 12 July and the communiqué of 8 August. Both parties should assume the responsibility to respect the Afghan people's desire for a peaceful and prosperous future and address the many challenges ahead of the nation. Any acts of incitement and violence during this final phase of the election process and the establishment of a new Government must not be tolerated.

With regard to the security situation in Afghanistan, we remain deeply concerned about deliberately targeted attacks against civilians and United Nations

staff. UNAMA's mid-year report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict indicates a 24 per cent increase in civilian casualties during the first half of 2014 as compared to the same period in 2013. We also note the worrying trend that engagements on the ground involving small arms and rockets are increasingly becoming the leading cause of civilian casualties.

Lastly, with the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, continuous and substantial international assistance is needed to support not only the Afghan security forces but also other significant national institutions. We note that NATO leaders renewed their financial commitment to support the Afghan security forces until the end of 2017 at the Summit held in Wales, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is critical for the Afghan Government to sign the necessary security arrangements for the establishment of a new mission to train and assist the Afghan forces.

In terms of the implementation of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, we recognize the Afghan Government's efforts to combat the illicit economy and corruption by enacting the laws on combatting money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. We call for their full implementation at the earliest possible date.

The stability of Afghanistan is in the shared interest of the international community. We support a peaceful and smooth transition in Afghanistan based on a government of national unity, with genuine partnership and inclusiveness. The Afghan people's aspirations for peace and prosperity, demonstrated during the electoral process, must be respected.

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the Ambassador of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, for their briefings.

Afghanistan has gone through a major turning point in its political life with the massive turnout of Afghans to choose their leaders in the elections of last April and June. Unfortunately, the hope that was kindled by the elections has evaporated with the post-electoral political impasse that the country now finds itself in. In that regard, we welcome the role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to help diffuse the situation by facilitating the signing of an agreement on an audit of the votes

for the two presidential candidates — Mr. Abdullah Abdullah and Mr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai. We thank UNAMA for and encourage it in its impartial logistical and technical support, which enabled the electoral audit. We also welcome the efforts of Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. John Kerry, to help the parties to reach an agreement on national unity following the announcement of the results.

In the same spirit, Chad supports the call recently addressed by the Afghan Ulema Council to both candidates, to rapidly resolve the crisis and form a national unity Government in order to fulfil the aspirations of the Afghan people. We reiterate our encouragement to all sectors of Afghan society — in particular the political parties, traditional and religious authorities and civil society — for their willingness to engage in direct and inclusive dialogue to solve the problem, which is the only guarantee for the maintenance of peace in Afghanistan.

The current post-electoral situation should not overshadow the major challenges Afghanistan is facing, which require the international community's constant support, specifically in the areas of security, humanitarian issues and combatting drug trafficking, terrorism and extremism. We welcome the political and diplomatic efforts that are being carried out at the regional and international levels for peacebuilding and increasing security in Afghanistan, and we hope that actions will continue in that area.

Chad congratulates the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on its tireless efforts during and after the elections to ensure security in Afghanistan and on its remarkable results in combatting drug trafficking. Given that the Force's mandate is coming to an end, we note the importance of rapidly de-escalating the political situation in Afghanistan so that a lasting solution to the security issue can be found after ISAF's departure.

Chad condemns all violence and terrorist acts perpetrated by the Taliban, linked with Al-Qaida and other armed groups. Those inhuman and cruel acts are serious crimes against humanity, and their perpetrators should be prosecuted and brought to justice. We believe that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of the motives.

We reaffirm our support to the Secretary-General's call to increase humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and to diffuse the political situation by

accepting the choice expressed by the Afghan people. We welcome the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and his Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, who called on both of the candidates to recognize the election results following the agreement that they signed. We also reiterate our request to the international community and the future government of Afghanistan to take all necessary measures to strengthen security after the departure of the ISAF forces from Afghanistan in order to avoid a situation similar to the current situation in Iraq.

Finally, we pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Ján Kubiš, outgoing Special Representative, for his courageous and tireless efforts as Head of UNAMA. We congratulate Mr. Nicholas Haysom on his appointment and wish him much success in his mission. We would like to encourage all United Nations staff and humanitarian actors, who, in spite of the challenging conditions in which they are working in Afghanistan, continue to work as best as they can to assist the Afghan people.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), for his briefing. We also thank him for his dedication and unflinching work alongside the Afghan people. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, for his briefing.

We are closely following the results of the democratic process in Afghanistan. The Afghan people have courageously expressed their free will throughout the historic and transparent elections. We hope that a national unity Government will be formed as soon as possible. The Afghan people's aspiration and optimism turned to disillusionment and concern about the future on account of the current electoral crisis. We call on the candidates to cooperate in a timely fashion in implementing the technical and political elements of the 12 July agreement so as to find an appropriate solution to the crisis. We also call on the candidates and all Afghan stakeholders to ensure the peaceful and democratic transfer of power, and to avoid any escalation of violence, which could have disastrous consequences for the country's future.

Afghanistan will surely encounter difficulties during and after the transition period. There will be interconnected economic and political challenges, particularly because the extremist forces seek to sow lasting instability in the country. International support

must therefore be significant, continuous and active during and after the transition period. The international community should honour its commitments and provide the means necessary to strengthen the security sector because the security situation in Afghanistan remains difficult. The security forces and civilians are still exposed to terrorist attacks. There are no words strong enough to condemn those terrorist acts. The United Nations must continue its work in Afghanistan, adapting to the changes on the ground during the period that lies ahead. We must also strengthen our partnership with Afghanistan because the international community cannot sit idly by while the situation deteriorates.

Work in the political and development fields and efforts to promote reform and update the development priorities must be coordinated in order to achieve sustainable development and strengthen the economy. At this critical stage, the Afghan authorities must pursue political and economic reforms aimed at strengthening the rule of law, good governance, the fight against corruption and the preservation of the progress achieved over previous years. That includes progress with respect to the human rights issues, which should not suffer as a result of the recent crisis. We urge the next President to take up the many challenges to the human rights situation in the country.

We hope for increased regional cooperation, a better understanding between Afghanistan and its neighbours, and a continuation of forums and meetings aimed at strengthening opportunities for economic cooperation. Accordingly, we warmly welcome the positive dynamic in Afghanistan's bilateral relations with its neighbours and we support all efforts aimed at building trust at the regional level.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I thank you, Madame President, for organizing this very important debate. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing. I want to acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, and thank him for his statement, which offers us considerable hope.

The enthusiastic participation of the people of Afghanistan in the three-month-long electoral process is a milestone in the political evolution of the country. It is also an indication that Afghanistan is on the path to peace and stability. We commend the efforts of the Independent Election Commission in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. As part of those

efforts, 110,784 electoral observers were accredited by the Commission prior to the run-off election, and an additional 2,000 polling stations were established within existing polling centres to improve accessibility. Out of the 6,365 polling centres that were open on election day, it is remarkable that only 140 were closed for security reasons.

We are concerned that the persistent tension between political leaders has delayed the conclusion of the electoral process. We therefore commend the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the United States of America and other partners in resolving the impasse by brokering an agreement between the candidates on 12 July. We believe that the agreement, together with the 8 August communiqué, which called for the audit of all votes case and a commitment of the parties to abide by the outcome, is a visible, feasible solution to the impasse.

It is particularly significant that the two presidential candidates also agreed to form a Government of national unity. We urge them and their supporters to respect those agreements and ensure that the ongoing electoral process is resolved peacefully in the higher interests of the people of Afghanistan. We welcome the successful conclusion of the auditing exercise on 4 September and expect that the audited results will be made public as soon as possible, which will seal the notable achievement of Afghanistan's first-ever democratic transfer of power.

It is disconcerting that the Taliban and other insurgent groups have decided to take advantage of the protracted political electoral impasse and the drawdown of the international military contingent to carry out their destructive activities around the country. We are even more concerned that civilians are the worst affected, with increasing numbers of deaths and injuries among women and children. We condemn those attacks and commend the dedication and courage of the Afghan National Security Forces as they continue to combat the terrorists. It is essential to consider expanding the listing procedure in the sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) to include individuals in the Taliban who are responsible for the new wave of terror in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's continued engagement with its neighbours in the promotion of regional cooperation in that regard remains vital. We welcome the plans for the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process ministerial conference in Tianjin, China, designed to deepen regional

cooperation and urge the Government of Afghanistan to seize the moment and maximize the benefits of that mechanism.

Nigeria commends the renewed efforts of the Secretary-General and his team in seeking a lasting solution to the situation in Afghanistan. Most notable is his recent engagement with the parties in an effort that is already yielding tangible results.

I would like to join colleagues who have spoken before me in expressing profound appreciation to Mr. Kubiš for his astute leadership at the helm of UNAMA and for his remarkable achievements and accomplishments. We wish him the best for the future.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the briefings delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin.

I begin my statement by underscoring the important role that the United Nations has played in the vote counting after accusations of electoral fraud in the second round of presidential elections in Afghanistan on 14 June. Further, we join the Secretary-General in emphasizing the bravery and determination of the millions of men and women who participated in the two rounds of elections, either as voters, candidates, campaign workers or observers.

The efforts of the Afghan people to bring about a peaceful, transparent and democratic transition in leadership have been exemplary. However, as indicated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, all of those efforts could end up meaning nothing if a Government of national unity is not formed as quickly as possible. For that reason, the international community continues to be called upon to play a crucial support and facilitation role in creating contexts for dialogue among all Afghans. It is important to promote dialogue, inclusiveness and consensus among Afghans; it is an essential factor when it comes to building a country that is able to stand on its own with solid democratic institutions and where the rule of law is in force.

With respect to the political process, Chile supports the process of national reconciliation, which is targeted at and led by Afghans with the aim of bringing peace and stability to the country and, naturally, in the region as a whole. We express our firm support for the active role of the High Peace Council in promoting efforts to achieve national reconciliation. Equally important is for

the new Government to respect its public commitments and to conclude a political agreement on a Government of national unity. We also hope that the international community will support the Government and the people of Afghanistan and work with them to create an environment that is conducive to the reconciliation process.

A modern, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan depends to a large extent on the success of the process of reconciliation in the framework of a global strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, as well as access for all Afghans to education, health services and work. It is therefore a priority to ensure that progress made by Afghanistan in human rights since 2001 be accelerated and consolidated.

It is the irrefutable responsibility of the Afghan Government to ensure the full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women so that the perpetrators of such violence are held accountable for their acts. Equally important is for the international community to continue to participate in long-term partnerships with Afghanistan, supporting the country's efforts during the transition period and beyond 2014.

We reiterate our appeal to the international community to continue to support the Afghan people in its efforts to strengthen its capacity to overcome the country's security challenges.

In conclusion, we express sincere appreciation for the work of Mr. Kubiš and wish him the greatest success in future.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/656). I also thank Special Representative Kubiš for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks this morning. As this is likely to be the Special Representative's last Council meeting, let me pay particularly warm tribute to Special Representative Ján Kubiš, who, for the past three years, has worked tirelessly to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. We wish him extremely well in his future endeavours.

I will focus my remarks on four issues: the recent NATO Summit, the electoral process, the next steps for Afghanistan and the role of the United Nations and the international community.

The NATO Summit in Wales, earlier this month, was an important opportunity to mark the achievements

and sacrifices made by the International Security Assistance Force mission. Afghan forces are now leading 99 per cent of the combat operations across Afghanistan and are proving increasingly effective. The Summit also demonstrated the international community's enduring commitment to Afghanistan. We reaffirmed commitments made at Chicago in 2012 to sustain the Afghan security forces throughout the transformation decade. The United Kingdom announced that it will continue to provide more than \$100 million per year to support the Afghan National Security Forces for the next three years, and we will work with international partners to train future leaders through the Officer Academy.

Turning to the electoral process, let me acknowledge the superb efforts of Special Representative Kubiš and his team and their work over the past few months in support of the independent election institutions in Afghanistan. Together, after a challenging period, they worked effectively to conclude the audit of Afghanistan's presidential election. But as the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan has made clear, the situation remains fluid and uncertain. As we near the end of what has been a protracted process, the Council must send a firm message to both candidates, urging them to engage constructively over the coming days as they seek to calmly resolve their differences and to work towards an agreement that establishes a new unity Government. They must continue to act in the best interests of the Afghan people.

The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to a lasting partnership with Afghanistan. Together, we must set out a constructive approach and press ahead quickly on key reforms and priorities. We look forward to the signing of the bilateral security agreement between the Government of Afghanistan and the United States and the signing of the NATO status-of-forces agreement as important steps to secure future international support.

Afghanistan also faces significant domestic challenges. Urgent work is needed to stabilize the economy and to protect the important gains made in human rights, in particular those of women and children. An inclusive peace process remains essential. A new Afghan Government must also continue to engage with key regional partners through initiatives such as the Heart of Asia process, in order to sustain the important progress made to date.

The United Kingdom looks forward to co-chairing the London Conference on Afghanistan later this year. The Conference will provide a further platform for the international community to demonstrate its solidarity with Afghanistan and for a new Government to set out its vision of the form and delivery of our shared priorities. The support of the Council and the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will be essential in that effort, both in signalling our expectations and in delivering key assistance on the ground.

It is an extraordinary time for Afghanistan. On the verge of a truly historic moment in their history, we urge all parties in Afghanistan to work in the interests of the Afghan people. We urge the international community to offer its full support.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I wish to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for his briefing. As this has been his last intervention in the Council in that capacity, I take this opportunity to commend him for his dedication and achievements in Afghanistan, together with his entire team. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his statement.

Afghanistan continues to face significant political and security challenges. As we speak, millions of Afghans are still patiently awaiting the final outcome of the presidential elections, which will lead to the first-ever, democratic transfer of power in the country. The enthusiastic voter participation amid the grave security risks has raised hope and has demonstrated the will of the Afghan people to assume ownership of their country. It would be unfortunate if the current deadlock over the election results were to jeopardize the future of the country.

In that regard, Rwanda is encouraged by the agreement between both candidates on their shared vision with regard to the elections audit and the formation of a Government of national unity. While awaiting the results of the audit, we welcome the consultations initiated by President Hâmid Karzai with both campaigns to end the gridlock and ensure that the current political climate does not lead to Afghanistan relapsing into conflict. We call on both candidates to demonstrate leadership and help the process to move forward.

At this crucial moment, Afghanistan needs continuing international support. In that regard, we commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and United States Secretary of State John Kerry for their efforts in engaging both candidates to form a unity Government.

For Afghanistan to realize sustainable stability and security, we all agree in the Council that there should be an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, as a foundation for peace in Afghanistan and the region. However, that does not seem possible, given the current violence perpetuated by the Taliban and other armed groups, which we strongly condemn. We are reminded that the prolonged political impasse is also a factor of instability, as it enhances the spoilers — including the Taliban — that are taking advantage of the situation to further destabilize the country.

In that respect, we commend the Afghan National Security Forces, which have demonstrated, since June of last year, their capability to ensure national security, despite a number of security incidents, including attacks on civilians and United Nations staff. The international community must continue to support the Afghan forces in enhancing their capacities, in both training and equipment, especially during the post-2014 period, in order to enable them to decisively counter ongoing threats, including organized crime and illicit drugs.

Noting the 63 per cent decrease in opium production in 2014, as compared to 2013, attributed to the efforts of the Afghan National Security Forces, we believe that sustained collective action is important in the region to curtail the continuing threat from drugs and organized crime.

Regional cooperation, mainly with neighbouring countries, is paramount in the areas of shared interests, such as the long-term counter-narcotics campaign, security, counter-terrorism, reconciliation and economic development. We believe that the meeting of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, held in Tianjin, and the leadership of China are important in that regard.

The political uncertainties and prolonged electoral period in the country have gravely affected Afghanistan's economy, which have led to declining investor confidence and poor revenue performance. We welcome, in that respect, the upcoming ministerial conference on development in Afghanistan, to be held in London in November. We hope that during the

conference, the donor community will be able to breach the growing funding gap and that the new Government will reaffirm its partnership with the donors, in line with the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

In conclusion, we believe that, in order to overcome the enormous challenges ahead, Afghans need strong leadership, one that will leave no stone unturned to ensure economic growth and inclusive governance, while fighting insecurity and illicit drugs, among other things.

With the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force by the end of the year, we appeal to the international community and to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in particular to continue to support the Afghan people and the new Administration with a view to helping them to overcome the multifaceted challenges they face.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to thank Special Representative Mr. Ján Kubiš for his briefing. I should like also to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his statement.

In recent years, thanks to the hard work of the people and the Government of Afghanistan, the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan has registered positive progress. But the country is also facing many challenges and risks. China hopes that a peaceful transition will be realized so that the Afghan people can focus their energy on development.

Here I should like to emphasize the following points.

First, China welcomes the fact that the two rounds of presidential elections were held in a largely smooth manner, marking an important step in the building of Afghan State institutions and reflecting the aspirations of the Afghan people to peace and a better life. At the same time, China has taken note of the disagreement between the relevant parties over the ballot count in the second round. We welcome the positive role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played in the auditing process. We also sincerely hope that the relevant actors in Afghanistan will put the fundamental interests of their country and people first, properly settle their differences through dialogue and consultation, complete the election process and form a new Government as soon as possible, and maintain national stability and unity.

Secondly, China staunchly supports the efforts of the Afghan people towards the realization of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned national reconciliation process. We support the playing of an important role by the Afghan High Peace Council. We hope that the international community will help Afghanistan to independently move forward with the reconciliation process. We also welcome the constructive assistance provided by neighbouring countries in this regard.

Thirdly, China is deeply concerned at the increasing number of security incidents in certain parts of the country and the mounting civilian casualties. We support Afghanistan's efforts to enhance the capacity of its National Security Forces and police force in order to respond to the various security threats. We welcome the continued assistance of the international community in that regard. At the same time, international initiatives should appropriately accommodate the reasonable concerns of the relevant parties, in particular the countries of the region.

Fourthly, China calls on the international community to honor its commitment and ensure uninterrupted economic assistance and support. The key is to help Afghanistan implement the priorities of its national development plan, increase its capacity to achieve independent economic and social development, and eliminate the sources of terrorism, drug production and trafficking, and cross-border organized crime.

Fifthly, China supports Afghanistan's efforts to participate more intensively in regional cooperation, and, on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, enhance mutual trust with the countries of the region and deepen cooperation in various fields. We should give full play to the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other regional mechanisms so as to achieve common security and development and allow the question of Afghanistan to move along its trajectory in line with the common interests of the Afghan people and the peoples of the region as a whole.

Sixthly, China supports the United Nations taking the lead in coordinating international efforts for the resolution of the question of Afghanistan. We hope that UNAMA will actively perform its duties according to its mandate, enhance communication with the Government, coordinate international assistance efforts and build the confidence of the international community in the transition process in Afghanistan.

We appreciate the important role played by Special Representative Ján Kubiš in promoting the peaceful transition of Afghanistan, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours. As one of Afghanistan's neighbours, China has always respected the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and respects the path of development chosen by its people in accordance with their national reality. We are participating actively in the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and are committed to deepening our strategic partnership. We look forward to a united, stable and friendly Afghanistan that enjoys sustainable development.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently appointed a special envoy for Afghanistan in order to enhance communication. We will maintain close communication with the Afghan Government and the relevant stakeholders so as to finalize, as soon as possible, the dates of the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process. China stands ready to work together with the international community to play a constructive role in helping Afghanistan to achieve political reconciliation, economic revitalization, lasting peace and sustainable development.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, for his briefing and to express my delegation's appreciation for his leadership throughout his tenure at the helm of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

With the support of the international community, during the past decade Afghanistan has made significant progress in a number of areas, including the rule of law, national capacity-building, human rights, women's participation, the educational and health systems, and infrastructure development. The elections held earlier this year reaffirmed the desire of the Afghan people to assume responsibility for the future of their country. Voter turnout spoke for itself. Many chose to vote in spite of intimidation and threats to their lives.

As the preliminary results of the presidential runoff audits are to be announced, we strongly urge the two contenders — Mr. Abdullah Abdullah and Mr. Ashraf Ghani — to place the interests of their people above all else and to translate their political passion for the future of Afghanistan into the formation of a national unity Government. The utmost care must be taken to

avoid any acts that could derail Afghanistan's historic transformation.

The leading role of the United Nations in responding to Afghan requests for support for the 12 July agreement is much appreciated. Audit supervision has been unprecedented in its scale, depth and scrutiny. UNAMA's outstanding work and coordination with International Security Assistance Force, European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe teams have been of critical importance to ensuring an outcome that genuinely reflects the will of the Afghan people.

The attempts made by terrorist and insurgent networks to take advantage of the protracted electoral crisis and the growing levels of violence in the country are of great concern. The sharp increase in the number of civilian deaths and injuries in 2014 resulting from escalating ground engagements between anti-Government elements and the Afghan National Security Forces, terrorist acts and the use of improvised explosive devices, particularly in civilian-populated areas, is a worrying trend.

We urge all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect the civilian population. The perpetrators of acts of violence against the civilian population must be brought to account. We also condemn all incitement and attacks against United Nations and other international staff, aid and medical workers, as well as their assets and facilities. Putting an end to impunity for such attacks is a must. Accountability must become part and parcel of how the new Afghanistan operates.

Continued international assistance will be essential in the years to come in order to sustain Afghanistan's transformation. We welcome the Wales Summit declaration on Afghanistan, which stresses the importance of the post-2014 Resolute Support mission contributing to the further development of professional Afghan security forces, and sends a strong signal on the necessity of continued international support for the protection of human rights, the development of the education, health and social sectors, as well as long-term political and economic cooperation.

In that context, we stress the urgency of concluding the status-of-forces agreement so that future security assistance can proceed smoothly. Lithuania remains committed to supporting Afghanistan's development and democracy. Our cooperation with and assistance

to the Afghan people, including financial support to the Afghan National Security Forces, will continue as stated at the Chicago Summit, the Tokyo Conference and other meetings on Afghanistan.

Lithuania will work closely with Afghanistan beyond 2014 as part of a new training mission once all the necessary agreements are in place.

We are well aware of the challenges that lie ahead for Afghanistan. Further progress is needed towards peace and reconciliation, strengthening regional ties, including through the Istanbul process and bilaterally, as well as tackling the illicit economy and advancing the rule of law. The new Government will have to step up actions aimed at addressing the country's economic situation, combating corruption and drug trafficking, about which other delegations have spoken, as well as implementing measures aimed at combating the financing of terrorism and money-laundering.

With regard to women's rights, we note that incidents of violence against women remain underreported, especially in rural areas, for fear of social stigma, exclusion or reprisals. We encourage the Afghan Government, as our colleagues from Australia and Luxembourg have done, to continue efforts aimed at implementing the Afghan national action plan on women, peace and security, the 2013 recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the 2009 law on elimination of violence against women.

Women's genuine and meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation, including peace jirgas and provisional councils, is an integral part of fostering durable peace and development in the country. Ensuring women's safety and dignity in the workplace is key to enabling women to join the civil service. The recruitment, training and retention of women in the Afghan national security forces must also be pursued vigorously.

In conclusion, the presidential candidates' acceptance of the election results and the formation of a national unity Government are the most immediate priorities for Afghanistan today. All eyes are on the two contenders. They cannot and must not fail the expectations of a nation that has been through so much. Afghanistan needs strong leadership and a viable, capable Government of national unity, a solid partner for the international community, which stands ready to continue to work closely with the country to create

a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future for all Afghan people.

Mr. De Antueno (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš, for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/656), and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his statement.

As we await the results of the second round of the presidential elections, Argentina calls on the candidates and the parties involved to accept the result of the vote recount so that Afghanistan can continue to consolidate its political transition, improve its stability and cement national unity. The challenges the new authorities will face are well known and include fulfilling the Afghan people's desire for peace in general and for cordial relations with other countries in the region. In that regard, we commend the ongoing efforts of the United Nations and Mr. Kerry, the United States Secretary of State, to generate dialogue between the presidential candidates, and to obtain a commitment to a political transition in the hands of a Government of national unity. We would also like to highlight the efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan to establish better and greater cooperation over national security, which could also be extended to other important areas.

Argentina notes with concern the increase in security incidents that occurred during and as a result of the second round of presidential elections in Afghanistan. We regret the attacks by the Taliban, criminal organizations and international and national terrorist groups. We note that they were aimed at civilian targets as well as military ones, resulting chiefly in innocent victims, particularly women and children. Like the Secretary-General, we believe in the importance of the Afghan national security forces, who have demonstrated their ability and effectiveness in confronting the country's many threats to peace. However, as the Secretary-General's report eloquently expresses it, their efforts will require the support of the international community, to a greater or lesser degree, in the next few years, if we are to achieve long-term peace and stability.

We would like to call attention to the importance of stepping up humanitarian efforts in order to combat the chronic child malnutrition in Afghanistan. We emphasize that resources must be allocated through a common humanitarian fund in order to prioritize the support and response of the United Nations and other non-governmental partners in the provinces where

malnutrition is most acute and problematic. We also support the efforts to implement the action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment.

Argentina supports the efforts to prevent the production and trafficking of drugs in Afghanistan. We emphasize the importance of the role of the United Nations in monitoring the drug situation in Afghanistan and of its support to national efforts, as well as the importance of coordinating the system's various agencies in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to the issue. Finally, we emphasize that the role of the United Nations will continue to be essential, both in helping a future Government of national unity to meet its commitments in the areas of development and security and in cooperating in the coordination of humanitarian assistance and the fight against the production and trafficking of drugs. We have full confidence in the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and will continue to support them in the future.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I would like to thank Special Representative Kubiš for his briefing today and for his ongoing leadership in challenging circumstances. We wish him all the best and are grateful to him for his service in a very difficult assignment. I would also like to thank Ambassador Tanin for a statement that eloquently conveyed the stakes of the current impasse.

My remarks today will centre on two issues, the election and the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the international community going forward. First, concerning the election, as the efforts to finalize its results proceed, we should not lose sight of the Afghan people's commitment to their democracy. Many Afghan voters took real risks and overcame fears for their safety in order to cast their ballots. No matter who they voted for, their votes were an affirmation of Afghans' desire to shape their country's future. We commend the Afghan auditors and observers for the critically important part they have played in this process. We also commend the United Nations, particularly UNAMA and the United Nations Development Programme, for their constructive role in the electoral process.

One of the Afghans who voted was Mohammad Ismail, a tyre shop owner in Kabul. In the June runoff,

he brought his six-year-old daughter Nida with him to the polls. She insisted, he told the New York Times, that "[w]hen I told her she did not have a voter card, she told me she would use mine." He said that he never thought he would have the chance to bring his daughter to participate in a vote. The turnout of people like Mohammad is a measure of the progress Afghanistan has made in the last 13 years. That progress has come at a high price, as the suicide attack in Kabul earlier this week, which killed three people and wounded five more, brought into stark relief.

So many people have given their lives in order to build a more democratic, secure and prosperous Afghanistan, and while there have been some setbacks, the progress is real. Afghans have seen improved access to education for all children, including girls. Fewer than a million students were enrolled in school in 2001, none of them girls; today, more than 8.3 million attend school, a third of them girls. Health care has improved dramatically. A decade ago 10 per cent of the Afghan people had access to basic health services; today, nearly two-thirds do. During this decade Afghanistan has seen the fastest gains in life expectancy and maternal and child health in the entire world. In 2001 there was virtually no independent Afghan media, only Taliban propaganda. Today Afghans can listen to 175 FM radio stations, watch 75 TV channels and read hundreds of print publications. All of that progress has changed people's lives for the better.

And the admirable patience of most Afghans with the democratic process, particularly through the recent recount, is a reflection of that progress as well. All of that progress now hangs in the balance. Until now, the candidates have been willing to stay at the table and work towards a compromise that would avoid the kind of divisions that could undermine Afghanistan's progress towards greater stability. Both have openly expressed their commitment to putting Afghanistan's future first. Our message to them today is to persevere in that effort and forge a durable compromise.

Secondly, we support UNAMA's ongoing efforts to assist the Afghan Government, from building good governance and strengthening economic development to promoting regional cooperation. UNAMA has been Afghanistan's partner since 2002 and will continue to play a role in the country's development. The United States is also committed to Afghanistan's ongoing growth, development and security, and will remain a close partner of its Government. That commitment

to Afghanistan is rooted in the strategic partnership we entered into in 2012. We look forward to working with the new Government to align our development assistance with its priorities and uphold the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

NATO allies and partner nations stand ready to continue to train, advise and assist the Afghan national security forces after 2014. Their mission will be based on the sound legal footing provided by the United States-Afghanistan bilateral security agreement and the NATO-Afghanistan status of forces agreement, which we hope will be concluded soon. The proposed plan, announced at the recent summit in Wales, is for the new NATO mission to be conducted in full partnership with the Government of Afghanistan. In the coming months, we hope to work with the members of the Security Council to develop a draft resolution welcoming the Government of Afghanistan's decisions on that agreement.

Not long ago, an election in Afghanistan would in itself have been unthinkable. Today, a six-year old girl can insist that her father take her along when he casts his vote. That should give us all hope for Afghanistan's future, and it should inspire the country's leaders to reach a political compromise, helping to insure that one day that girl can cast her own ballot.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for organizing today's debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for their briefings. We also thank the Secretary-General for his quarterly report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/656).

Afghanistan is at a historic crossroads, poised as it is for its first-ever democratic transfer of power. We must acknowledge the leadership and statesmanship that have been shown by President Karzai and the Afghan leadership over the past 13 years, which have brought Afghanistan to this historic juncture.

I cannot hide the fact that we are concerned by the present political impasse in Afghanistan surrounding the election results. We must not forget that the Afghan

electorate braved threats from terrorist and extremist elements to turn out in large numbers during the first and second rounds of voting. There is no better testimony to the strong popular support for democracy that exists in Afghanistan and for preserving the valuable gains of the past 13 years. We are confident that the two leading candidates will respect that noble sentiment and the wish of the Afghan people for a peaceful, stable and democratic country.

The political transition that will be completed with the inauguration of the new President will be an important milestone in Afghan history. It will mark not only the culmination of a process that is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled, but also a process that carries the hopes and best wishes of the international community. Recently, on 10 September, our honourable Minister of External Affairs visited Kabul. Her words in Kabul during the inauguration of the flag monument describe our relationship in a holistic manner:

“India will always be Afghanistan's first strategic partner. We are committed to assisting Afghanistan in whatever way is possible within our means.”

I would like to reiterate that we do not have the luxury of an exit strategy in Afghanistan. We are undeterred by the cowardly attack of 23 May on the Indian consulate in Herat. That attack reflected the deep designs of terrorist forces that want to eliminate every institution that believes in the promotion peace and stability in Afghanistan. We stand with the Afghan people in assisting them on the path of growth and prosperity.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains fragile. The Secretary-General's latest report gives details of that. The report mentions that security incidents in the south, south-east and east accounted for 65.3 per cent of total incidents during the reporting period. Therefore, those areas must be accorded greater resources and attention to ensure a better security situation in the days to come. The international community must render its full support to Afghanistan to defeat the forces of terrorism, which do not want peace in Afghanistan.

With respect to the reconciliation process, we would like to reiterate that it must remain Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled, while respecting the agreed red lines. We would never endorse treating the

Government of Afghanistan on a par with the elements of the erstwhile Taliban regime.

The Secretary-General's report further mentions that Afghanistan's economic situation today is of grave concern. In addition, the report mentions that tackling Afghanistan's growing funding gap and ensuring that recurrent budgetary costs can be met will also be an immediate challenge for the new administration. It is reported that the prolonged electoral process, which saw senior Government positions vacated, months of campaigning and the severe uncertainty of the post-election impasse, contributed to a precipitous drop in growth, declining investor confidence and poor revenue performance. India stands ready to assist Afghanistan on its path to economic recovery. We must not allow our attention to be diverted from the equally important issue of economic development in Afghanistan.

With respect to the role of UNAMA, we believe that the Mission has an important role to play in supporting the activities of the new political institutions of the Afghan State. No other organization can represent in full measure the international community's concern for Afghanistan and its vision for a peaceful, sovereign, independent and prosperous Afghanistan. But UNAMA must also focus on the important role it plays in ensuring the delivery of valuable humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan. The Mission is uniquely placed to deploy the professional and physical resources required to deliver much-needed humanitarian and development assistance to the remotest corners of Afghanistan.

India's commitment to assisting the people and Government of Afghanistan in consolidating the impressive gains of the past 13 years to which you referred, Madam — including political reconstruction — remains unwavering. India shares civilizational links with Afghanistan and will stand by our Afghan brethren as they build a peaceful, pluralistic, democratic prosperous Afghanistan.

To conclude, we would like to express our full support for the political, social and economic transition that is taking place. We sincerely hope that the political impasse will be over without any further delay, and that the acceptance of the results by the leaders will provide a solid foundation on which a new chapter of Afghan history will be written. We would like to reiterate our unwavering commitment to the people and Government of Afghanistan at this critical juncture.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Sahebzada Ahmed Khan (Pakistan): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Ján Kubiš, for his statement. Over the past three years, Special Representative Kubiš has provided the leadership and the vision that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has needed. We also appreciate his recent visits to Pakistan. Let me also thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his statement.

Pakistan supports a peaceful democratic transition in Afghanistan. We have pursued a policy of neutrality, stressing that the elections are an Afghan affair. Members may recall that we enhanced security along the border during the two rounds. The completion of the electoral process in a credible and timely manner will, we hope, bring about a stronger, more stable and unified Afghanistan. We welcome all sincere efforts aimed at promoting understanding between the two presidential candidates. Pakistan has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to working with whoever emerges as the democratic choice of the Afghan people.

Pakistan and Afghanistan agree that terrorism is a common enemy and on the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination to deal with that common menace. Pakistan, as members know, is making a resolute and stern effort against terrorists and their hideouts through our military operation Zarb-e-Azb. We expect all possible cooperation from the Afghan Government to take measures to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries on their side. Regrettably, we have seen a proliferation of cross-border attacks into Pakistan over the past few months. That has been coupled with unsubstantiated allegations. Our constructive engagement will, we hope, help build trust. We also remain committed to working on the economic, trade and energy linkages envisaged in Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's prosperous neighbourhood strategy.

We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that the Afghan economy is a source of grave concern. Economic decline would have an impact on everything — reconstruction, security, refugee repatriation and peace and stability. It is important that the international community recommit to supporting Afghanistan at the London Conference later this year. "Predictability" and "continuity" are the key words.

Strengthening the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is essential for dealing with the security challenges pertaining to the situation post-2014. It is reassuring that the international community, at the NATO Summit in Wales, reaffirmed its continuing engagement with Afghanistan through pledges of increased financial support to the ANSF. We also believe that sustainable peace is not possible without comprehensive national reconciliation. We hope that proper attention will be paid to an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. That is an essential pillar of stability that cannot be indefinitely ignored.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/656) mentions the declining rate of refugee return. We hope that Afghanistan will work on creating the pull factors necessary for the sustainable return of Afghan refugees. Another issue of concern for us is the illicit economy. We agree with the Secretary-General that it has been both a symptom and a source of uncertainty.

Pakistan continues to be constructively engaged with regional and international efforts for Afghanistan's stability and development. We appreciate the wise leadership that China is providing for the Istanbul Process and look forward to the ministerial conference in Tianjin.

In the end, a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in Pakistan's vital interest. We recommit ourselves to supporting all endeavours in the cause of peace, stability and the development of the country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Madam President, I thank you for organizing this meeting. I would also like to thank Special Representative Kubiš for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

With the crucial phase Afghanistan has reached in terms of the political, security and economic transformation it is undergoing, our continued support to Afghanistan is vital for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan that can effectively serve the needs of its people. It goes without saying that the international community should keep investing in positive scenarios for Afghanistan at this vital juncture.

The Afghan people have demonstrated strong will, courage and determination to move towards a peaceful, democratic and stable Afghanistan, by participating enthusiastically in the presidential and provincial

elections despite the security risks. It is time to honour their wish. The recent completion of the nationwide audit of the ballots cast in the country's 14 June presidential elections run-off is a step in the right direction. We believe in the capacity of Afghanistan to undertake a successful political transition, and we believe that all stakeholders will act responsibly, exercise self-restraint and show genuine leadership and partnership. The consequences of the failure of governance efforts would be too great for any of us to bear.

We deeply regret and condemn the terrorist attacks that have taken place in Afghanistan in the reporting period, resulting in the deaths of many civilians. We believe that those heinous attacks will not derail Afghanistan's efforts to achieve a peaceful transformation. We stand beside Afghanistan in this difficult period and reiterate our fullest support.

The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2014/656) highlights that Afghanistan has continued to engage with its neighbours in the promotion of regional cooperation. As international forces are withdrawing, regional cooperation and commitment become increasingly vital for transforming the region into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity. Based on that vision, the region must come together to transform common problems into mutual interests. In that context, we appreciate all bilateral and multilateral dialogue and cooperation efforts and welcome the positive momentum that has been reached in the Istanbul Process, including the senior officials meeting held in Beijing on 10 July. We are looking forward to the upcoming Istanbul Process conference in Tianjin, and we would like to thank China for its leadership in that regard.

I would like to voice our strong support for the crucial and comprehensive role that the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will continue to play in supporting Afghanistan during the post-transition period. I also want to voice our heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Kubiš. His tireless efforts and dedication have undoubtedly brought Afghanistan one step closer to peace. We would also like to extend our support to his successor, Mr. Haysom, and wish him good luck in his endeavours.

To conclude, Turkey will always remain in solidarity with the Afghan people, and we will continue to contribute to a safe, secure and prosperous Afghanistan, as we have done for many decades.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude to you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. At the outset, allow me to thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his unwavering leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. I understand that this is his last appearance in the Security Council. We wish to thank Mr. Kubiš very much. The Mission led by him has been playing a vital role in the political process regarding the development of Afghanistan despite difficult circumstances on the ground.

I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States. Secretary Kerry has been instrumental in facilitating an agreement on a Government of national unity between the two presidential candidates, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah and Mr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai.

Since the landmark Tokyo conference of January 2002, the international community has been steadfast in its commitment to the development of Afghanistan. In the Tokyo Declaration of 2012, Afghanistan and the international community established the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The Framework aims at strengthening the international partnership for the sustainable development of Afghanistan throughout the transformation decade, which starts next year.

Since 2001, Japan has contributed \$5.4 billion towards the security and sustainable development of Afghanistan. That makes my country the second largest donor after the United States. As Japan's first Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I have had the honour of taking an active part in the process. As embodied in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, the international community's ability to sustain support for Afghanistan depends upon Afghanistan delivering on its own commitments. Long-term international support presupposes a credible and legitimate partner on the Afghan side. Hence, Japan expresses its disappointment at the recurrent delays in the electoral process. More than five months have already passed since the first round of presidential elections on 5 April. Nevertheless, consultations between the two candidates have yet to lead to an agreement on the establishment of a Government of national unity.

Afghanistan stands at a crossroads. We do not wish to see our partnership put in jeopardy by further domestic political disarray. We therefore reiterate the

need for a fair, prompt and peaceful conclusion of the electoral process. Japan urges both sides to live up to the commitments made on 12 July and 8 August by accepting the final election results and forming a Government of national unity as soon as possible.

A vast array of challenges awaits the new Government. They include the consolidation of an inclusive political system, fighting corruption, guaranteeing the safety of the Afghan people, securing a stable budget and achieving sustainable growth. We hope that a Government of national unity, supported by a broad national consensus, will tackle those challenges without delay.

At the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July 2012, Japan committed to providing up to \$3 billion over a five-year period, starting from 2012. Of that \$3 billion, \$2 billion have already been disbursed. Japan looks forward to the day, in a not-so-distant future, when it can work with a new and legitimate Government of Afghanistan on its path towards achieving lasting stability and prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Mayr-Harting.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/656), Special Representative Kubiš for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

With so many competing issues, it is particularly important to ensure there is continued focus on Afghanistan and the difficult times faced by the Afghan people. Let me start by reiterating our full support for the important continuing role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and all the United Nations agencies in supporting the Afghan people and in coordinating the international community's assistance. The role of the United Nations will be even more important in the years to come.

We would like to acknowledge the role played by the United Nations in supervising the unprecedented audit of all the votes cast in the run-off presidential election. Both United States Secretary of State Kerry

and Special Representative Kubiš deserve praise for their tireless efforts regarding the election process. The European Union is pleased that we were able to play our part in mobilizing the required observers to satisfy Afghans' desire for an international observation capacity. It remains important that the electoral process be completed in as transparent a way as possible. It is now urgent that both candidates put the national interests of Afghanistan first and live up to their commitments to establish a Government of national unity.

The new Government will face many immediate challenges. It needs to be unified and robust in tackling them head on and in not allowing vested interests to divert its sense of purpose. Afghans have shown that they are hungry for reform, both to safeguard the progress that has been made in the past thirteen 13 and to use that platform as a basis for renewed progress. We look forward to the London Conference on Afghanistan in November as an opportunity to reaffirm our partnership with a new Government on the basis of their commitment to reform.

I want to highlight three critical areas, namely, security, economic and human development, and the rule of law and human rights.

Afghans must be assured that their security will be maintained. The early signing of the bilateral security agreement between Afghanistan and the United States is of key importance in that regard. The agreement is critical for a continued international presence to support Afghans in their endeavours. The role of neighbouring countries is also important in ensuring that insurgents are unable to undermine hard-won gains and cause instability that could threaten peace and security in the region.

Security is a necessity for the continuation of the economic and human development that has taken place in Afghanistan. Progress has been impressive in many areas, but the new Government will need to take rapid action to improve confidence in the economy. Above all, it has to take quick action in order to overcome the reform backlog and to tackle the current fiscal crisis. Beyond that, the new Government should prioritize the rural economy, which remains the lifeblood of the vast majority of Afghans. It also needs to increase the rule of law while fostering transparency and combatting corruption. The rule of law is critical to progress in many areas, none more so than human rights, in particular the rights of women and girls.

It is worth recalling that 13 years ago women and girls were treated as second-class citizens. They were not allowed to work or go to school. They could not leave their house, except in the company of a male relative. Today, Afghans, and Afghan women in particular, are to be applauded for the progress that has been achieved. But there is still much to be done. In many areas, the statutory framework is no longer the problem. But consistent and routine application of the law remains an area where sustained action is needed. We believe that must be a clear priority for the new Government.

In conclusion, all those challenges will require a strong commitment from both the new Government and the international community. The European Union and its member States will remain steadfast partners, as set out in our new comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan, which was endorsed in June.

Finally, like others, I would like to pay tribute to Special Representative Kubiš for his tremendous contribution to a better future for all Afghans — the future they want and that they deserve.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zamaninia (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this timely meeting. I also wish to thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement and Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/656) and for briefing on key political and security developments and on regional and international events related to Afghanistan. We continue to support him and his team in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and their outstanding services. Afghanistan and its neighbours will remember the services Mr. Kubiš has rendered to Afghanistan for a better life in that country.

UNAMA is playing a very crucial role at this critical moment of political transition in Afghanistan, and definitely needs further support from the international community in order to enhance peace, security and stability in the country and promote sustainable socioeconomic development in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran is indeed very eager to see a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan as its neighbour. We are ready to do everything in our power to that end, since security in Afghanistan directly and indirectly affects security in the region, including my country.

We commend the Afghan people for their broad-based participation in the presidential elections despite the threat by extremist and terrorist groups. We hope that the stalemate in the election process can be overcome soon. The prolonged and contested electoral process tends to exacerbate economic uncertainty and encourages extremist groups, terrorists and their associated networks to take advantage of the protracted political crisis and to indefinitely increase their activities. We urge both presidential candidates, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah and Mr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, to conclude their negotiations on the formation of a Government of national unity and thus pave the way for a stable political transition that is consistent with the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. We also urge them to reach a political settlement in the country as soon as possible. During the most recent visit by Mr. Kubiš to Iran, in August, we emphasized that the establishment of a Government of national unity was a matter of urgency and priority for Afghanistan and the region.

The continuing engagement between Afghanistan and its neighbours and regional partners in the areas of trade, economic exchanges and development projects must be further supported and strengthened. We firmly believe that more economic ties will reinforce the stability in Afghanistan and its surroundings.

We continue to expand our bilateral cooperation, particularly on security matters, counter-narcotics efforts, developing projects and economic cooperation in the fields of infrastructures and agriculture, as well as for a durable solution for Afghan refugees. The recent visit of the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and the Pacific and his meetings with President Karzai and other Afghan officials was aimed at developing and strengthening bilateral relations in all fields.

The international support for the Triangular Initiative on cooperation on countering narcotics among Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan is essential, not only to strengthen the security and stability of Afghanistan but also to alleviate the serious concerns of neighbouring States and transit and destination countries with regard to drug trafficking.

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran once again reiterates its continued support for the promotion of security, stability and comprehensive and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): Let me thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/656). I would also like to express our deep gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his tireless efforts during the past years and, particularly, for the constructive role that he most recently played during the election process. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Nicholas Haysom as the new Special Representative and look forward to continuing our close cooperation with him in his new capacity. I also appreciate Ambassador Tanin's presence in the Council today.

My Government aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier in this debate.

It is now more than three months since the Afghan people cast their votes in the presidential elections in June. The Afghans — including, most encouragingly, millions of women — have shown tremendous courage in making use of their constitutional right to actively participate in the elections, defying the Taliban threats to disrupt the process. The most comprehensive audit process, to which Germany contributed substantially, has been undertaken. We are also very grateful for the role that the United Nations has assumed in the process. Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah have agreed to establish a unity Government. It is now time to deliver on their commitments. As Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier recently underlined during his recent visit to Afghanistan, both candidates must embrace their responsibility for the future of Afghanistan. Only a united Afghanistan will be able to overcome the many challenges lying ahead.

I would like to mention four important points, also with a view to the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in supporting Afghanistan in tackling those manifold challenges.

First, the impact of the current electoral conflict is far-reaching. Afghanistan is showing symptoms of a true State crisis. Even if the candidates agree on a Government of unity, cooperation will be an immense challenge after the difficult process of the past months. It will take hard work to restore the confidence of the Afghan people in the political elite and in public institutions.

Secondly, necessary economic and political reforms were put on hold while the election was being audited. That further exacerbated the current economic and fiscal crisis. The new Government urgently needs to tackle the reform backlog.

Thirdly, a new Government is the precondition for the full implementation of the civilian and military commitments of the international community. As long as there is no new Government, the envisaged NATO post-International Security Assistance Force Resolute Support mission cannot be put into force. In our opinion, it is also crucial that the new mission be founded on a sound legal basis. It should ideally be supported by a Security Council resolution.

Fourthly, once there is a legitimate Government, the international community should continue to support Afghanistan's reconstruction and development. With a shift of responsibilities in Afghanistan and the immense challenges lying ahead, the commitment of the United Nations will become even more important. It is indispensable that UNAMA have a comprehensive mandate and work on a financially sound basis to be able to support Afghanistan in the aforementioned areas. It is also important that UNAMA not only be present in Kabul but also continue to work throughout the country.

Let me finish by saying that Germany stands ready to continue its support for Afghanistan. We very much hope that the new Government will work towards uniting the country in building a stable political environment for a peaceful, secure and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council is meeting again to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. The situation is slightly different than the one we considered three months ago (see S/PV.7208), as we can see from the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Spain is a friend of Afghanistan. The people and the Government of my country have demonstrated that all these years. Spain has responded throughout the 12 years with constant actions to the requests of Afghans. We stand by Afghanistan and will continue to do so. My delegation fully endorses the statement made earlier by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union, but I wish to add a number of considerations on various issues with regard to, first, the elections and,

secondly, aspects of the security, the economy and the regional and international dimensions.

With regard to the elections, the men and women of Afghanistan recently demonstrated great courage on 5 April and 14 June. We are at a crucial point. It is clear that we must strengthen the political process. Only a renewed and strengthened leadership will be able to provide a hopeful future for the people of Afghanistan.

Regarding the security situation, we note with concern the information outlined by Secretary-General in his report (S/2014/656), in particular the 24-per-cent increase in the number of civilian victims. We take this opportunity to convey our regret to Ambassador Tanin following the attack by the Taliban in the centre of Kabul two days ago.

With regard to the economic situation, we are concerned about the deterioration noted in the performance of the Afghan economy. That perhaps goes hand in hand with the worsening security situation. However, we are sure that the ministerial conference, to be held in Tokyo, will yield results for the economic situation in Afghanistan.

Finally, we believe that regional efforts are absolutely key. There are great expectations. In Spain's view, there is a hopeful future with the ministerial conference to be held in Tianjin, the People's Republic of China.

We once again reiterate our support for the Government and people of Afghanistan, through Ambassador Tanin, who is present. In conclusion, on behalf of the Spanish delegation, I would express our gratitude for the efforts and outstanding work of Mr. Ján Kubiš during all these years as head of UNAMA.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/656) and Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing. Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union and would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The uncertainty of the results of the Afghan elections and the continued absence of a new President, in the context of the last phase of the transition process — a very delicate juncture for Afghanistan — are a source of grave concern for the future of the country. That

is why it is crucial for the electoral process to reach a positive outcome in the short term that is accepted and trusted by a majority of the Afghan people. The pursuit of the necessary dialogue between the parties should be driven by the highest interest of the country. It is therefore our strong hope that the efforts undertaken by the international community, in particular the United States and Special Representative Kubiš, whom we fully support, will be crowned with success. To achieve that goal, all stakeholders must show great moderation and a sense of responsibility and avoid divisive initiatives that might undermine an agreement.

We expect the commitment of the two presidential candidates that was reiterated in the message addressed to the NATO Heads of State and Government at the Celtic Manor Summit to be realized as quickly as possible so as to create a solid foundation for the socioeconomic development, peaceful settlement and stabilization of Afghanistan. Today, it is more urgent than ever that the electoral process be finalized through the installation of a new President and a new Government. That will also reward the widespread action and commitment of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to guarantee to the Afghan people the right to express their wishes at the ballot box and to limit the insurgency's attempts at destabilization.

The insurgency continues to be a dangerous force, as demonstrated by the fresh wave of terrorist acts in recent months. That is why Italy, together with its partners, has affirmed the commitment that it made in Chicago two years ago and reiterated most recently at the Celtic Manor Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government, to support the ANSF in the transition to the post-International Security Assistance Force phase.

At the same time, however, Afghanistan should implement transparency and accountability criteria in the management of the resources allocated to it. The prompt signature of the bilateral security agreement between Afghanistan and the United States and of the status of forces agreement with NATO is imperative if the resolute support mission is to start. The purpose of those agreements is to provide the necessary legal framework for the presence of international troops in the country.

My country reiterates its wish to carry on its more than decade-long commitment to foster the development and stabilization of Afghanistan, in coordination with the broader action of the international community. Consistent with the legacy of Tokyo, the

conditions for that to happen are based on concrete and measurable progress by the Afghan parties in the field of human rights, particularly those of women, democratic principles, the fight against corruption and drug trafficking, and administrative and economic governance. In those areas, thanks also to the ISAF mission, Afghanistan has made giant steps forward, though much remains to be done.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing today.

Let me align myself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, but let me also make some comments in my national capacity.

These are historic times for Afghanistan. We have all been closely watching the key events of the past few months. Further development cannot be achieved in any country in a politically unstable environment. We call upon the Afghan political leaders to engage in mutual dialogue and to uphold the commitments they have undertaken. Only a leader with a stable mandate and internal political support will be suited to address the remaining challenges the country is facing.

The acceptance of the election results, fulfilment of commitments and formation of the Government of national unity are the means of setting the country on the right track. An inclusive political concept reflecting the diversity of the Afghan population is crucial. We therefore welcome the candidates' joint statement addressed to the NATO summit pledging to form a national unity Government.

Political stability and economic prosperity are inseparably linked. Economic situations are sensitive and reflect political realities, while investors carefully observe any political mistrust. Despite the continuing challenges that will require the immediate attention of the new Government, we have faith that the steps needed to promote the licit economy and achieve a transparent and balanced budget will be taken in a timely manner.

The parameters of post-2014 international security support should be agreed upon as soon as possible, especially in the light of current events and the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force coming to the end. The extremist groups never refrain from taking advantage of any political crisis. We commend

the work undertaken by the Afghan National Security Forces in the challenging current circumstances. It will be crucial to further focus on developing their quality, loyalty and professionalism. The Slovak Republic is determined to further participate in that process, be it through training of the Afghan National Security Forces or direct financial help.

Apart from the engagement of the international community in the areas of peace and security, comprehensive development assistance remains vital for the country's stability. International assistance should be multifaceted, long-term and tailor made. It should encompass humanitarian aid, investments in institutional and economic development and the rule of law. Internationally targeted projects aligned with the priorities of the Afghan Government can improve the daily lives of the Afghan people.

For Slovakia, Afghanistan remains among the top three priority programme countries for Slovak official development assistance. The target areas of our assistance for the upcoming years are threefold: the improvement of education, the modernization of the agricultural sector, and the building of capacities in the area of security sector reform. However, lasting success will be very difficult without Afghanistan's neighbours actively engaging in regional cooperation. The common interplay between Afghan stability and regional security is obvious. A stable Afghanistan is a precondition for a secure region. Durable constructive engagement by regional partners is a precondition for a stable Afghanistan.

The pivotal role of the United Nations remains essential, and we encourage Afghan political leaders to profit from the huge potential that lies in effective cooperation with the United Nations. Nevertheless, outside support itself cannot guarantee progress or a democratic transition for the country. The ultimate responsibility for the citizenry rests upon State leaders. In recent months, the Afghan people demonstrated an extraordinary amount of bravery when, despite the threats and attacks of extremist groups, they cast their votes.

Against the current backdrop of political uncertainty, let us not forget about all the tremendous progress the country has achieved in its democratic transition, from assuming security responsibility to taking steps towards gender equality. Those important victories represent the base our future efforts can be built upon.

Let me conclude by expressing our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Kubiš, for their dedication and leadership. I congratulate the United Nations for its action that it undertook in supervising the unprecedented election audit. I also wish to thank the team of the Mission for their professional work in uneasy conditions and reiterate the full support of my country for the irreplaceable role of UNAMA.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Winid (Poland): I would like to thank the United States for convening this debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I am glad that Poland can contribute to this important discussion.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to offer a couple of additional remarks.

The first one is quite sad. Just two days ago, the forty-fourth Polish soldier to die in Afghanistan since the beginning of our engagement in the International Security Assistance Force mission passed away. Platoon leader Rafal Celebudzki was killed in a suicide attack on the streets of Kabul, together with two American soldiers. He left behind a wife and two young children. We pay tribute to his memory, which serves as a symbol of the sacrifice of many Polish families who send their sons and daughters to help rebuild a stable, safe and prosperous Afghanistan.

The Government of Poland reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism and strongly condemns all acts of terror, especially when directed against those who work towards the country's stability and security. Recalling resolution 2145 (2014) and previous resolutions on Afghanistan, we want to reaffirm our strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

Our debate today is the best opportunity to underline the role that the United Nations plays in the process of the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The coordinating role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the activities undertaken by the Special Representative, Mr. Ján Kubiš, enjoy our full support and respect. I would like to join all our colleagues in congratulating and thanking him the great work he performs in Afghanistan.

Poland welcomes the recent NATO summit's conclusions on Afghanistan, and we hope that the decisions made by member States will help that country to achieve security and prosperity. We also reaffirm our continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan as they rebuild their country and strengthen the foundations of democracy. For the first time in the Afghan electoral process, independent observers could be present for the audit of every single ballot box utilized in the presidential run-off. We believe that the compromise solution proposed by United States Secretary of State John Kerry is a step in the right direction and hope that both candidates will honour their pledges. Poland would like to underline the role of professional international observers from the European Union Election Assessment Team, various non-government organizations and 17 diplomatic missions in Afghanistan who participated in the process.

We are convinced that the election process should not be further delayed, especially taking into account the fact that the audit process has been concluded. Prolonging the debate on the division of power is harmful to the stability of Afghanistan. We encourage all sides to accept the results of the audit and start cooperating fully with the newly elected authorities. That is especially important in the light of a deteriorating security situation, not only in the southern and eastern parts of the country, but also, for example, in Ghor province in the west, Logar province in central Afghanistan and Kunduz province in the north, not to mention Kabul, where a tragic terrorist attack took place just two days ago.

Poland is worried about the budgetary stability of Afghanistan. There is a growing funding gap, which would become an immediate challenge for the new Administration. We hope that the Afghan Government can resolve the problem as soon as possible and act decisively to avoid such issues in the future. Poland's involvement in Afghanistan results from our sense of responsibility for the situation in that country. Since 2001, we have been an active participant in various international mechanisms and regional cooperation initiatives supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan, mainly within the framework of the Istanbul Process. Strengthening regional cooperation is the best way to tackle problems of a cross-border nature, such as terrorism, drug trafficking or natural disasters.

The Polish provincial reconstruction team in Ghazni has executed almost 200 projects, spending over \$26 million to help build roads, water and sanitary installations, bridges, schools, power plants and other infrastructure. Let me also add that the Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz, Poland, has trained over 1,000 soldiers and police officers of the Afghan National Security Forces. Afghanistan is the second biggest recipient of Polish development aid.

In conclusion, Poland is ready to support Afghan security forces in 2015 and beyond. We will focus on helping the Afghan police force through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan. We are ready to take part in the Resolute Support mission. We therefore urge the Afghan Government to sign the Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement and the NATO status of forces agreement.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš and his team in Afghanistan for all their efforts of recent months.

(*spoke in English*)

The past few months have shown the strength of the commitment of the Afghan people and the international community to the democratic process in Afghanistan. That has not been an easy road. We were initially buoyed by the excellent turnout of Afghan men and women in the April 2014 presidential election and the run-off vote in June, in spite of threats of disruption, and then were disappointed and concerned by the allegations of fraud, which threatened to undermine confidence in the democratic process. While there are still issues to be resolved, we recognize our unified and unprecedented effort in the election audit observation process supporting that historic event.

This effort has been remarkable, both in scale and in the level of resources applied. Canadian election observers joined hundreds of colleagues from the international community to work with their Afghan counterparts on a full-scale audit of the election. We are proud of the cooperation of the international community and the Afghan people in this historical undertaking. We especially commend the United Nations coordination of this complex and very challenging task.

(spoke in French)

We urge parties on all sides in Afghanistan to put aside their differences and to focus on what brings them together — working towards a safer, more secure and more prosperous future for all Afghans. We remain steadfast in our commitment to the Afghan people in our support of these efforts.

As NATO leaders acknowledged earlier this month, despite continuing challenges, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have demonstrated that they are an effective force, gaining the respect and confidence of the Afghan people in the battle against the insurgents. The ANSF will take full responsibility for Afghanistan's security by the end of 2014, which is an example of the real and tangible progress achieved through the shared efforts carried out in the framework of the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The international community has helped to train over 335,000 ANSF personnel; that is an extraordinary achievement. With the ISAF mission ending this year, the need to ensure that the ANSF is trained and equipped to protect and secure Afghanistan is greater than ever.

The international community's support to Afghanistan will endure beyond ISAF, including through its collective contribution to the financial sustainment of the ANSF from 2015 to 2017. To that end, we strongly urge the Government of Afghanistan to sign the United States-Afghanistan bilateral security agreement and to conclude the NATO Afghanistan status of forces agreement as soon as possible. Those agreements are essential to enabling the international community to plan for the next phase of military assistance to Afghanistan and to maintaining strict accountability and transparency measures for the sustainment of international funding to the ANSF.

(spoke in English)

Canada remains committed to supporting the ANSF, including the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, in order to strengthen its capacity to respond to threats and provide security for the Afghan people. We will therefore contribute \$330 million over three years to the NATO fund for the ANSF, starting in 2015, subject to overall conditionality of transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness. That will help to ensure lasting results for the hard-won progress that Canadians have made in Afghanistan. We welcome the international community donors' renewal of their

financial commitments to supporting the Government of Afghanistan in sustaining a sufficient and capable ANSF.

Our funding builds on the legacy of Canada's substantial efforts to promote the rule of law and develop capable, professional security forces in which Afghans can take pride. More than 40,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces have served in Afghanistan for over the past 12 years. In the Afghan province of Kandahar, Canadians have trained and mentored the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. Canada provided up to 950 military personnel at a time in the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan to help train the ANSF, and our civilian police have trained and mentored approximately 23,000 effectives of the Afghan National Police over the past 11 years.

Afghanistan's new leadership will face a number of urgent issues. Leaders will need to move quickly to address the range of economic challenges facing it, particularly given the significant impact of recent events, such as the electoral uncertainty on business and financial investment confidence. Gross domestic product growth has slowed considerably due to reduced economic activity, and will likely decline further with the expected reduction in international aid and spending after 2014, thereby putting further pressure on Government finances. We hope to see the Government turn its efforts to improvements that will encourage economic growth and investment, including through the development of its extractive sector. We also need to see robust efforts by the Afghan Government to increase accountability and transparency across all its ministries.

Canada will continue to help Afghans build Afghanistan into a viable country that is better governed, more stable and secure through investing in: the future of Afghan children and youth through programming in education and health, including for maternal, newborn and child health; advancing security, the rule of law and human rights through support and training to the ANSF, and the civil and political participation and economic empowerment of women; promoting regional diplomacy, and through humanitarian assistance. Canada's \$227 million in development assistance between 2014 and 2017, committed to in Tokyo in 2012, is contingent upon the achievement of essential reforms by the new Government of Afghanistan. Canada encourages the new Afghan leadership to redouble

efforts to fulfil its commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

Afghans have a right to chart a course forward to build the future they demand — free of the country's warlords, free of regional interference, which only leads to chaos, and free of the endemic corruption that must be routed at every part of national life. It is clear that with the range of challenges ahead, the resolve and commitment of the Government must be strong. The strength of Afghanistan lies in its people: those who support and strive for a safer, more secure and prosperous future in a country where all their views are represented and all their voices are heard. That includes Afghanistan's women, who are a vibrant, vital and equal part of Afghan society. We call on Afghanistan's new leadership to truly respect its citizens, particularly by promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls.

We call upon the new Government to work actively towards increasing the participation of women in Afghanistan Government institutions at all levels, in accordance with its commitment on resolution 1325 (2000). We also call for the government to meet its

international commitments by supporting the passage and implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law, to ensure the protection of Afghan women and girls from all forms of violence and abuse, and children from early and forced marriage.

We will continue to stand with the Afghan people as they strive for a safer, more secure and prosperous future for their country. This decade of transformation will see both changes and challenges for Afghanistan, its partners and the region. We remain steadfast in our commitment to Afghanistan. Canada calls on Afghanistan's leaders to work for, and with, all Afghans to improve security, bolster democracy, increase transparency and protect the human rights of all those within its borders.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.