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Provisional

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mahamat/ Mr. Mangaral	(Chad)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kavar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Sana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/876)

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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/2014/876)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this briefing: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy 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/2014/876, 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. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: On behalf of the United Nations family in Afghanistan, I would like to begin by expressing my most sincere condolences to the people of Pakistan, who two days ago suffered a cruel national tragedy. An attack on school children is an attack that can never be justified.

At the last Security Council briefing (see S/PV.7267), the results of the elections had yet to be announced and the country was in the midst of a protracted political crisis. I am pleased to report that

significant progress has since been made. A political agreement has been signed, the winning candidates of the presidential and Provincial Council elections have been announced and the Government has committed to an ambitious programme of governance reforms.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has been greatly encouraged by the peaceful political transition. While the electoral process was prolonged and challenging, the result is a leadership that is legitimate, freshly mandated and broadly supported. President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah are to be commended for their ongoing commitment to make the national unity arrangement work. In their stated commitment to the partnership they have created, they have indicated that the partnership is one of their own choosing and not an imposition. Their sense of common purpose and clear commitment to reform, to combat corruption and to promote sustainable economic growth has given rise to renewed hope and a palpable sense of expectation among the Afghan people.

The political agreement was brokered following an unprecedented 100 per cent audit of a paper-based election. That difficult exercise, not without its flaws, was designed to be comprehensive, thorough, independent and transparent. Conducted in conformity with available international best practices, the process, however imperfect, was neither biased nor arbitrary and laid the foundation for the negotiations of the political agreement that followed.

UNAMA remains convinced that there was no better way forward than a National Unity Government. The agreement between the two candidates ended a political crisis that would at best, if unresolved, have left the country divided and that could at worst have reignited past cycles of conflicts. President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah recognized that the moment called for statesmanship over gamesmanship. They themselves suggested that the choice they faced was to swim together or to sink separately. I would nonetheless now urge the political leaders to conclude the process for the appointment and approval of senior Government officials. A politically representative yet merit-based Cabinet can strengthen the population's confidence that the Government intends to deliver on its election promises. It will demonstrate the workability of the National Unity Government arrangements and signal that the new Government is ready to govern.

Prior to the London Conference on Afghanistan, many in the international community asked themselves how its success would be measured. The broad consensus was that it would need to deliver a clear pledge to critical reforms by the Government as well as a reaffirmation by the international community of its enduring commitment to Afghanistan. I am pleased to report that both those objectives were met.

The Government's paper entitled "Realizing Self-Reliance — Commitments to Reform and Renewed Partnership" sets forth a thoughtful, bold and much-needed programme of reforms. The paper's emphasis on public accountability, transparency and human rights mirrors many of the issues for which Afghan civil society has long advocated. To maintain the momentum created by the London Conference, the Afghan Government will need to take action to overcome its current budgetary difficulties. Due to a further drop in revenue collection, the fiscal situation seems to be graver than that portrayed in policy discussions in London. The receipt of emergency donor support in November has helped the Government cover key expenses up until December. The fundamental problem, however, has not been resolved. Significant arrears will need to be carried into the next budget. That is not sustainable, and risks derailing the Government's development agenda and the country's path to stability.

The international community needs to work with the Government of Afghanistan on concrete measures to implement the Government's reform agenda in time for the forthcoming post-London meeting of senior officials. The new Administration has pledged to make the legal, institutional and policy reforms needed to sustain hard-won gains made in regard to women's rights during the last 12 years. UNAMA will continue to emphasize that upholding and advancing women's rights is an essential step on the road to peace and development. To that effect, I welcome President Ghani's commitment to appointing a substantial number of women to senior positions in the Government.

Initial steps taken by the Government to combat corruption must also be acknowledged. They have signalled the National Unity Government's will to put an end to impunity for those who have appropriated the nation's resources for themselves. Those efforts will need to be combined with measures to diminish the corrosive social and political impact of the growing illicit economy and the narcotics trade. I leave further comments on that to the Executive Director of the

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov.

As evidenced by the President's recent regional engagements, the new Government recognizes the importance of strengthening relations with its neighbours. Afghanistan, by virtue of its geographical location, has an important role to play in the region's growth and stability. The country can serve as a potential land bridge between Central Asia and South Asia. UNAMA will advocate with Afghanistan's northern neighbours that their security concerns are best promoted through connectivity and trade with Afghanistan rather than by hardening their borders.

We are confident that recent agreements with Azerbaijan, China, Pakistan and Turkey and an expanding regional energy and transportation network can lead to increased trade and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours. That in turn will bolster employment and Government revenues, and ultimately lead to greater stability. Creating such opportunities is not charity; it is in the self-interest of all of Afghanistan's neighbours.

The recent Beijing Declaration put on record the region's support for timely Afghan-led reconciliation. It is a recognition that the support of regional stakeholders is essential to any peace process. China's renewed engagement in that regard is to be welcomed. President Ghani's visit to Pakistan, followed by an exchange of visits by senior officials to and from Kabul and Islamabad, has paved the way for a more productive and forward-looking dialogue, and may lay the groundwork for closer cooperation between the two countries.

Stability and prosperity can simply not be achieved in the absence of a durable peace. Ultimately, the solution to the conflict in Afghanistan is political rather than military. President Ghani himself has made that clear, and has extended an invitation to those who oppose the Government to enter into an inter-Afghan dialogue to resolve the conflict. That commitment to direct dialogue between the Government and the armed opposition through an Afghan-led peace process is to be welcomed. UNAMA stands ready to support Afghan-led and owned reconciliation and political processes, and will engage all parties in support of that, in full consultation with the Government.

The necessity for a peaceful resolution to the conflict is underscored by the appalling human cost borne by ordinary Afghans. As of 30 November,

UNAMA had recorded more civilian deaths and injuries this year more than in any other year since 2008. Civilian casualties increased 19 per cent overall from last year, with a figure of 33 per cent in respect of children. Those casualties resulted mostly from ground engagements between parties to the conflict, improvised explosive devices, and suicide and complex attacks carried out by anti-Government forces.

The increased targeting of marketplaces, deminers clearing unexploded ordnance, and various sporting and cultural events suggests a shift in approach by anti-Government elements. By way of example, the 23 November suicide attack on a large crowd watching a volleyball match in Paktika killed at least 53 civilians, including 21 children. As Afghan security forces assume the lead in protecting the civilian population, international forces must remain engaged with the Afghan National Security Forces in mitigating the devastating effects of conflict on civilians. I can report that UNAMA continues to engage with the Taliban on the critical issue of responsibility for and avoidance of civilian casualties.

With the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force mission, I would want to recognize the contribution of all contributing Member States and honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of a peaceful and sovereign Afghanistan. The Government has now taken full responsibility for the security of the country. The Afghan National Security Forces are meeting the challenges of the insurgency with determination and courage, but at great cost. In that regard, the joint decision taken by NATO and the Government of Afghanistan to launch the Resolute Support Mission as of 1 January 2015, and resolution 2189 (2014) in support of the Mission, are vitally important. Sustained and predictable international security assistance is vital. The recent surge in security incidents is cause for concern. It is too early to assess whether the surge is timed to coincide with the withdrawal of international military forces, or is the new normal. UNAMA itself is reassessing its security measures, but is not curtailing its activities.

When they voted in such large numbers in the presidential and provincial elections, Afghans acted on their belief that elections would deliver a better future. The ensuing political stalemate, however, has left many questioning the value of the democratic process. It is therefore the responsibility of the Government to convince the Afghan electorate that duly adopted

reforms will deliver less fraudulent elections. One of the first steps will be for the Government to bring certainty to the electoral calendar by announcing realistic dates for the holding of parliamentary and District Council elections. We note that the political agreement signed between the two parties provides for comprehensive electoral reform prior to the Wolesi Jirga and District Council elections envisaged for 2015. We strongly encourage the Government to use the opportunity offered by the reform process to engage the Afghan people in a transparent and consultative manner as a way to improve their confidence in electoral institutions.

I would like to thank my predecessor, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš, for his leadership of UNAMA during a most challenging period of transition. He has left a mission held in high regard by the Afghan population. For the past 13 years the international community has rendered unprecedented support — military, financial and political — to Afghanistan. With the conclusion of the political and security transitions, the means and form of support will necessarily evolve and change — more specifically as the Council reconsiders the UNAMA mandate next year. What will not change, however, is the shared goal of a peaceful, sovereign and increasingly prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: I would like to start by expressing my most heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We are deeply shocked by the horrific terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar that resulted in the death of so many innocent people, including children. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) remains committed to supporting the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to promote peace and security. Pakistan is a key partner of UNODC in the region in addressing the challenges of drugs and crime.

This time of transition has had a clear impact on drug control efforts in Afghanistan. The new leadership and the international community face formidable challenges posed by illicit drugs. Nevertheless, the transition also presents an opportunity to assess counter-narcotics strategies and to ensure that our responses are strong and effective. Since I reported to the Council in June (see S/PV.7208), UNODC released

the Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014 last month. The report, unfortunately, confirms the negative trend of the continued increase in opium cultivation and production. The total estimated area under cultivation rose to 224,000 hectares in 2014, an increase of 7 per cent over the record level of last year. Eradication decreased from 7,348 hectares in 2013 to 2,692 hectares in 2014. As a result, production has climbed as much as 17 per cent to 6,400 tons. Average opium yield rose 9 per cent. I will stop quoting figures and numbers, as they are contained in the Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2014/876).

All in all, the illicit opium economy and related criminality, money laundering and corruption continue to threaten security, social and economic development, governance and health in Afghanistan, the region and beyond. That has been repeatedly recognized by the Security Council, including in its presidential statement of June (S/PRST/2014/12). The question before us remains: what can we do to stop illicit drugs from undermining the fragile progress, imperilling the future of Afghanistan and causing global harm?

First and foremost, the lessons of the past decade strongly suggest that counter-narcotic efforts must be fully integrated into development and security strategies, and delivered as part of unified assistance. We must do more to ensure that action to weaken the stranglehold of drugs and crime goes hand in hand with efforts to strengthen the licit economy. The importance of integrating counter-narcotics responses is reaffirmed in resolution 2145 (2014). It is further reflected in the continuing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, as well as in the preparations for the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on drugs.

Our responses must be long-term and adequately resourced, and they cannot be allowed to fall victim to silo mentalities or piecemeal approaches that cannot produce sustainable results.

I was in Kabul in November to meet President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. In our meetings, three priorities for comprehensive drug control were identified, which can guide us as we move forward: first, enabling alternative development as part of a broader and more comprehensive and more ambitious effort to modernize the agricultural sector; secondly, improving prevention, treatment, care and rehabilitation services; and, thirdly, countering

organized crime and drug-trafficking through enhanced regional and interregional cooperation.

Let me begin with the first point. Farmers need viable, licit livelihoods as a sustainable alternative to opium cultivation. As experience in other countries facing drug cultivation and production challenges has shown, eradication can be successful if fully supported by meaningful alternative development programmes. Reducing the vulnerability of farmers and communities must also include addressing the issue of access to irrigation and local markets, as well as access to education and health care. UNODC's *World Drug Report 2015* will feature a special thematic chapter analysing the available evidence on the implementation of alternative development programmes, which can also help to inform efforts.

Afghan opium accounts for 80 per cent of global production. The devastating impact on health and communities that illicit drugs have had in many countries is well known. But Afghanistan also pays a terrible price. The prevalence of opiate use in Afghanistan is among the highest in the world.

It is increasingly recognized that a balanced approach to the world drug problem must address demand reduction, with prevention and treatment services, including for HIV, based on scientific evidence and respect for human rights. Supporting and expanding such services must also be a priority in drug-control efforts in Afghanistan. UNODC is developing and piloting new programmes for drug prevention and treatment services for children exposed to drugs at a young age.

Shared responsibility is the guiding principle of the international community's support and involvement in Afghanistan. The importance of regional cooperation has been reaffirmed by the Security Council. Nevertheless, we must do more to ensure that that shared responsibility become better operationalized so as to control drug-trafficking networks. We must reinforce cooperative action against corruption and money laundering, strengthen governance and promote effective criminal justice responses to stop impunity.

UNODC is also supporting Afghanistan's efforts to engage with its neighbours and the broader region. Through a three-tier, national-regional-global approach, UNODC is helping to weave together cross-border law enforcement, cooperation in criminal matters and drug-prevention responses, based on sound research of opiate

trade trends. That interregional approach connects West and Central Asia, South-East Europe, the Gulf region and Eastern Africa — regions affected by the illicit trafficking of opiates and precursor chemicals from and into Afghanistan.

UNODC's "Networking the Networks" initiative has facilitated a number of joint intelligence-led drug-control operations that are currently under way. We are also working with several countries through the Maritime Crime Programme to address the growing problem of heroin-trafficking on the high seas of the Indian Ocean, the so-called southern route. The Container Control Programme, which has been extremely effective in countering all forms of illicit trafficking, is now expanding beyond sea ports and dry ports to develop airport capacities, starting with Pakistan's Karachi airport.

The importance of enhanced coordination also applies to the efforts of the United Nations system. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Afghanistan for 2015 to 2019 provides a solid platform for a joint United Nations response, including on counter-narcotics. Coordinated action also helps to ensure the efficient use of the available financial resources and international aid.

President Ghani, at the recent London Conference, affirmed Afghanistan's readiness to overcome the past and face the future with full unity and with confidence. We must support Afghanistan in this momentous task and begin the decade of transformation with courage and determination.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Republic of Chad for its leadership of the Security Council this month and for having convened this debate. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2014/876). I also welcome the statement of Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and congratulate him on his recent appointment. I would like to thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his presence here today and for

his briefing. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Ambassador Quinlan and the Permanent Mission of Australia for their support and great efforts as penholder on Afghanistan on the Council for the past two years.

The international military combat mission in Afghanistan, authorized under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations 13 years ago in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, will officially end in 14 days. Just a few days ago, the Council adopted resolution 2189 (2014), which reaffirms the completion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force and welcomes the Resolute Support Mission, aimed at training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces on the basis of agreements between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, NATO and the United States. This is a historic step towards a new beginning in Afghanistan and a key marker of the country's transition to a new chapter in its relations with the international community.

This monumental achievement comes on the heels of another significant moment in the history of Afghanistan, and another major victory for the transition agenda: the presidential elections. While complex and challenging, the elections culminated in the first peaceful transfer of power from one elected leader to another in the country. The agreement of Afghanistan's leaders to put the country's successful future ahead of political division and establish a National Unity Government fostered an environment of hopefulness, inclusivity and political consensus and cemented the foundation for lasting peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

While the people and leadership of Afghanistan are confident that the country is moving in a positive direction, the challenges Afghanistan faces are formidable. Insecurity remains the main impediment to progress across the country. In the past several months, terrorists and insurgent groups have intensified attacks in an attempt to deplete national confidence in the new Government and to intimidate the Afghan people. As they commit acts of violence and brutality against innocent men, women and children, extremist armed groups should know that the courageous Afghan security forces stand ready to fight for the future of Afghan democracy, peace and security. Their resilience, particularly during the election period and throughout the past year, demonstrates their commitment to

protecting the lives of Afghans and the future of the country.

In the months and years ahead, the sustained support of the international community, including through the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership and the Resolute Support Mission, as well as the commitments made at the Bonn Conference; the Chicago, Lisbon and Wales Summits; and the recent NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels, will continue to be essential to enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the Afghan forces in the years ahead. At the same time, the Government of Afghanistan recognizes that a political solution is essential to stopping the violence and the continuing terror campaign. To that end, an extensive reconciliation process with the armed opposition is high on the Government's agenda.

As Afghanistan takes steps to overcome security threats, the country faces immediate economic challenges, including a looming fiscal crisis. The protracted election process triggered uncertainty and negatively impacted revenue collection, donor confidence and economic growth, making it difficult for the Government to mobilize adequate revenue to meet its financing priorities. We call on our international partners to fulfil their commitments to supporting the country so that the Government can close the long-running fiscal gap and deliver on its reform promises.

The National Unity Government has devised a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at addressing both the immediate and the long-term challenges Afghanistan faces and at enabling the country to make progress towards self-reliance, sustainable growth, peace and stability. Today, I will highlight a few key aspects of the new agenda that the leadership of Afghanistan presented in full to international partners at the London Conference on Afghanistan earlier this month.

The first is fighting corruption. By recognizing the corrosive effects of corruption, the Government of Afghanistan has already taken steps to tackle that endemic scourge and its underlying drivers. In its first days in office, the new Administration reopened the Kabul Bank case and made plans to reform a number of key oversight bodies.

The second is advancing good governance. The Government is committed to strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the rule of law, enhancing human rights, particularly the rights of women and

girls, and undertaking comprehensive reforms of electoral laws and institutions.

The third is promoting economic and fiscal stability. Afghanistan is committed to enhancing productivity, mobilizing domestic revenue and expanding private-sector investment, growth and employment opportunities with the ultimate aim of reducing Afghanistan's dependence on donor support and achieving long-term sustainability and prosperity in the country. The illicit drug economy is a grave concern, and to this end the Government is committed to a comprehensive response to combat this menace, in collaboration with our regional and international partners.

The fourth is strengthening regional cooperation, which will set Afghanistan firmly on the path towards peace and security and will enhance growth, prosperity and stability in Afghanistan and across the region. President Ghani's State visits to China, Pakistan and Azerbaijan and his engagement with other neighbouring countries, as well as his attendance at key regional meetings — such as the seventeenth South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in Kathmandu and the fourth Heart of Asia/Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in China — indicate the priority that the new Government is giving to regional integration. The Government has also taken steps to increase transit, trade, investment and energy and power projects, such as the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline, and to utilize Afghanistan's geographical advantage as a hub connecting Central, South, West and East Asia.

The fifth is enhancing the development partnership. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to delivering on its commitments as set out in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. At the same time, it is crucial that donors reaffirm mutual commitments to aid effectiveness principles, including the importance of building Afghan capabilities, delivering more aid on budget, and aligning development initiatives with Afghan national priorities. We look forward to deepening these mutual commitments at the senior officials meeting in 2015 in Kabul and at the next ministerial meeting in 2016.

The National Unity Government has already taken significant, positive steps to advance its reform agenda and to lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability

in the country. Its decisive actions in the areas of governance, security, economic and social development, regional and international relations and human rights, and its successful achievement of key milestones in the transition process have sent a powerful message to the people of Afghanistan and the international community that, as President Ghani has said, a successful Afghanistan is entirely within our reach. At the same time, we recognize that a great deal of hard work lies ahead of us, including the formation of a merit-based Cabinet, which the leadership of Afghanistan aims to accomplish in the coming weeks. Moving forward, the Government is dedicated to sustaining the optimism of the Afghan people and to building a successful future.

At this critical juncture in the country's history, the National Unity Government is determined to build upon the enthusiasm of the Afghan people and the successes of the past 13 years to take bold steps towards self-sufficiency, peace and prosperity for all Afghans. As it does so, the enduring support of the international community is essential to the success of the Government's comprehensive reform agenda, to the country's efforts to achieve the objectives of the transformation decade, and to enduring peace, stability and prosperity in the years ahead.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of Chad.

We congratulate Mr. Nicholas Haysom on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and thank him for his briefing. We also thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his briefing.

Chad commends the President-elect of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, and Chief Executive Officer Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, for their leadership, which has allowed the country to emerge from the political impasse in the post-electoral period. We encourage them to maintain this momentum of solidarity in order to address the major challenges faced by the country. We also welcome the unflagging efforts of the international community, notably UNAMA, and of Afghan civil society and traditional and religious leaders during this crucial phase of Afghanistan in its history.

The current post-electoral environment should not serve to mask the challenges that the country faces. The situation requires the ongoing support of the international community, especially in terms of security, the humanitarian situation and the combat against drug trafficking, terrorism and extremism.

Along those same lines, Chad takes note of the commitments entered into by President Ghani and of the call made on all political, traditional, religious and military groups, including the Taliban and Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin, to join the process of the political resolution of the crisis, so as to bring stability and prosperity to Afghanistan.

Chad welcomes the signing of the cooperation and military assistance agreements between Afghanistan and the United States on the one hand and NATO on the other, aimed at filling the gaps that will emerge with the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), whose mandate will conclude on 31 December.

We wish to pay a resounding tribute to ISAF for the role that it has played and for the tremendous sacrifices that it has made, and we hail the memory of fallen ISAF personnel. Chad welcomes the political and diplomatic efforts made regionally and internationally to build peace and security in Afghanistan, and we encourage those efforts to continue. Chad believes that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, whatever the motives might be. We condemn all violence and terrorist acts perpetrated by the Taliban or linked to Al-Qaida or other armed groups. Such inhumane and cruel acts represent serious crimes against humanity, and their perpetrators must be pursued and prosecuted.

We remain concerned at the tenor of the most recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which shows an increase in drug trafficking, including opium and other narcotics, whose negative consequences for national security are incalculable. We encourage neighbouring countries and the international community to step up their efforts in order to ensure greater coordination in the fight against the cross-border traffic in drugs and illicit substances.

The implementation of joint and mixed patrols with neighbouring countries will allow for improved surveillance of common borders. We are concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, particularly that of internally displaced persons, and call

on the international community to make greater efforts to assist them. We would also recall the call made by the Secretary-General to increase humanitarian assistance. We condemn the attacks perpetrated by armed groups against humanitarian workers and the obstacles of all kinds that are hindering the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

To conclude, we pay homage to outgoing President Karzai for the efforts he deployed in endowing Afghanistan with a Constitution and in fostering the democratic transition of power, for the first time in the history of that country. We wish the current Government every success. We commend Ján Kubiš, the outgoing Special Representative, for his tireless efforts and the courage that he has shown throughout his time at the helm of UNAMA.

Lastly, we commend and encourage all United Nations and humanitarian agency personnel, who, despite the difficult conditions in which they are discharging their duties in Afghanistan, continue to do their very best to help the people of Afghanistan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank Nicholas Haysom for his first briefing to the Council as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and I welcome him to the role. I also thank Mr. Yury Fedotov for his briefing and acknowledge Afghanistan's Permanent Representative, Zahir Tanin, for his central and always very persuasive role in Afghanistan's engagement with the international community. The year 2014 — Afghanistan's year of transition — is drawing to a close. Despite the many challenges facing the country, it has been a successful year.

Afghanistan has taken the lead for security across the country, historic presidential elections were held, and important economic reforms are under way. The millions of Afghans who participated in elections this year, under the threat of violence, cast an uninhibited, unambiguous vote in favour of democracy. The formation of President Ghani's and Executive Officer Abdullah's National Unity Government is a historic achievement, marking the first democratic transition of power in Afghanistan. Appointing an inclusive cabinet will be an important first step, and we look to President

Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah to do this without delay.

Drawing on the lessons of the presidential elections, and as set out in the National Unity Government agreement, we look to the Government to implement important electoral reform ahead of parliamentary and district council elections. President Ghani has demonstrated his Government's commitment to stronger regional relationships. The region needs much closer, serious cooperation on security, including in the fight against terrorism and to counter narcotics.

Afghanistan's security transition will be complete at the end of 2014, when the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission concludes. Over the last 13 years, ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have substantially reduced the threat posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliates. We all pay tribute to the many men and women, both military and civilian, who have given their lives in pursuit of this mission.

The ANSF is now assuming full responsibility for securing the country. The ANSF has grown from scratch in 2001 to a professional force capable of providing security across Afghanistan. Its performance in securing two rounds of presidential elections is testament to this. Of course, it faces challenges from increasingly violent anti-Government forces — forces responsible for most of the very worrying increase in civilian casualties.

As Afghanistan assumes security responsibility, the international community remains committed. The NATO-led Resolute Support Mission will continue to train, advise and assist the ANSF. My own country, Australia, will contribute personnel to Resolute Support and provide \$100 million a year from 2015 to 2017 to sustain the ANSF. Resolution 2189 (2014), adopted unanimously by the Council last Friday, was an important reaffirmation of international community support for Afghanistan's transition and for the Resolute Support Mission.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan has made impressive progress on development. Eight million children are now in school, including 3 million girls. Forty women sit in the Afghan parliament. Life expectancy is up, and infant mortality is down. A total of 15 million Afghans now own a mobile phone.

It is clear that Afghanistan's new Government is determined to achieve self-reliance. Key to self-reliance

will be economic growth, which will ensure strong Government revenues. At the London Conference on Afghanistan earlier this month, donors and the new Afghan Government focused on development priorities and mutual accountability. We are reassured by the Government's commitment to deliver on its ambitious reform programme. Australia will support this and continue to provide substantial development assistance in support of economic growth, empowering women and girls, and humanitarian assistance.

Much progress has also been made on human rights. The new Government has demonstrated that it is committed to advancing the position of women and girls in Afghan society. Full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and the finalization and implementation of a national action plan on women, peace and security must be priorities. An inclusive peace and reconciliation process that recognizes the role of women will have a much greater chance of success. As I have said consistently, along with others, progress on women and girls will be and must be a decisive indicator by which Afghanistan's progress will be measured by all of us who want to support Afghanistan's successful transition to the future.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has been a serious partner in Afghanistan. That was made clear through its central role facilitating the resolution of the protracted political election process this year. Australia looks forward to UNAMA, with adequate resources, continuing its focus on good offices, human rights, donor coordination and humanitarian assistance. A strong UNAMA with a strong partnership with the new Afghan Government will be vital, as will a continued UNAMA role across the country and in the provinces.

To conclude, 2015 will mark a new and hopefully decisive chapter in Afghanistan's history. Afghanistan's transformation decade will be period of great opportunity, but axiomatically also one of great challenge. Afghanistan has made extraordinary progress following the collapse of the Taliban. It has established a democratic Government, created functioning State institutions, built an effective security force and achieved remarkable — if not complete — gains on human rights. Australia, like the rest of the international community, is committed to supporting Afghanistan — an Afghanistan now

ultimately in the hands of the Afghan people and their Government.

It has been an honour to serve as penholder on Afghanistan in the Council. I appreciate the close cooperation of all Council members, Member States and of course Afghanistan itself. I thank Ambassador Tanin and his team for their own strong leadership in so diligently working for the success of the new Afghanistan. The Council has been united in its support for Afghanistan, and that reflects the international community's resolute commitment to Afghanistan's future.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Nicholas Haysom, for his briefing. I wish him a warm welcome to the Council in his new role. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Yury Fedotov, and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for their statements.

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

Afghanistan has come a long way since 2001. The path has been strewn with hardships and sacrifices, but also remarkable advances. That is evidenced by the progress made in the fields of education and health. It is also evidenced by the regular holding of elections and the first democratic transfer of power. The international community must recognize the progress that has been made and the credit that is due to the Afghans. Nevertheless, it must not lose sight of the challenges that remain.

Today it is absolutely necessary that the Afghan ruling class put itself fully at the service of its people and quickly agree on the formation of a National Unity Government that reflects the diversity of the country. Otherwise, the destabilizing effect of political uncertainty will strengthen the power of those looking to return Afghanistan to its old demons.

To meet the huge challenges ahead, the National Unity Government, once formed, will need the continued support of the international community, which is willing to provide that support. At the London Conference on 4 December, donors reiterated their commitment to staying at the side of the Afghan people. On the security front, the NATO Resolute Support Mission, heralded by the unanimous adoption of

resolution 2189 (2014), will provide advice, training and assistance to Afghan security forces. The international community's support will continue to be manifested through UNAMA's work on the ground. I will say more on that in a moment.

While security efforts are essential to the stability of the country and the protection of civilians, efforts to improve human development will be critical to the long-term stabilization of Afghanistan. Respect for human rights is, in this respect, a crucial element, and improving the status of women is an absolute necessity. We are encouraged by the fact that President Ghani Ahmadzai has expressed his support on many occasions for the respect of human rights. For our part, we would like to call on the new authorities to spare no effort to prevent, report and denounce violence committed against Afghan women. We also advocate that the progress made in terms of the status of women not be sacrificed on the altar of a possible national reconciliation agreement.

In human development, the fight against poverty must be another priority. The proportion of the Afghan population living below the poverty line is still too high. National resources must be allocated in a more equitable manner. Large-scale economic reforms are needed and will also have to address the growing dependence of the country on the illicit economy linked to drug trafficking.

Another key area is that of child protection. We welcome the fact that the National Assembly has passed a law criminalizing the recruitment of children by the Afghan National Security Forces. That is an important step in the implementation of the action plan to counter the recruitment and use of children. We encourage the authorities to persevere in those efforts. We are nonetheless concerned at the continuing reports of boys arrested and detained because of their alleged association with armed groups or on charges related to national security. Those children must first be considered victims and immediately transferred to child protection specialists.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our appreciation for the outstanding work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In the coming years, with the withdrawal of international combat troops, the support role of UNAMA will become even more important. Supporting the Afghan authorities in strengthening the rule of law, shoring up

democracy and protecting human rights will continue to be at the heart of the Mission's mandate. The important role that the United Nations has to play in terms of good offices and international assistance coordination should also be taken into account. UNAMA should have the adequate means to fulfil its mission in order to ensure a field presence throughout all of Afghanistan.

There are many areas in Afghanistan that require work. Some will lament that the progress made is not being made fast enough or not going far enough. That may be true. But not going far enough is still moving ahead, and that alone is encouraging for those Afghans who have demonstrated that they want to take their fate into their own hands to shape a better future for their country.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and Executive Director Yury Fedotov for their presentations. As this is the first time that Special Representative Haysom has briefed the Council since his appointment, I would like to extend him a warm welcome. I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

Today, Afghanistan stands on the threshold of the transformation decade, looking towards a self-reliant and sustainable future. We have seen some positive signals, including the aspirations of the Afghan people who cast their votes in the elections, defying the threat of terrorism in the first-ever democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history.

Still, there are numerous challenges ahead. Afghan-led efforts, supported by international assistance, are essential to bringing about a more peaceful and prosperous country. In that vein, we recognize the firm determination of the newly launched Afghan Government to improve governance, democratic institutions and the rule of law. In particular, we recognize its recent reform agenda, namely, realizing self-reliance, commitment to reforms and renewed partnership, as a comprehensive framework in which to tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan. We ask the Afghan Government to make strenuous efforts to implement this reform agenda. While we stress the importance of the inclusiveness and representativeness of the new National Unity Government, the formation of its Cabinet should be expedited.

With regard to the security situation, we are deeply concerned about ongoing violent terrorist activity by

the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups. We condemn in the strongest terms the indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including those committed with improvised explosive devices. Given the assumption by the Afghan National Security Forces of full security responsibility at the end of this year, continuous international support to strengthen its capabilities is critical in the struggle against such terrorist activities. In that regard, we appreciate the sustained support of NATO and contributing partners to Afghanistan beyond 2014, including through a Resolute Support Mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces. We also welcome the Council's adoption of resolution 2189 (2014) in that connection.

Afghanistan's illicit economy, which depends mainly on increasing opium cultivation and production, is another source of concern. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/876), opium production, which accounts for roughly four per cent of the country's gross domestic product, is linked to insecurity, as 89 per cent of opium cultivation was concentrated in the most insecure provinces. Noting the strong connection between drug trafficking and terrorist activities carried out by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, strengthened and resolute efforts by the Afghan Government, supported by international and regional partners, are essential to fight this scourge.

The London Conference on Afghanistan, held early in December, which my Foreign Minister attended, served as an important opportunity to reaffirm the international community's commitments to support Afghanistan throughout the transformation decade. The Republic of Korea has played its part in the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan through its provincial reconstruction team in Karwan from July 2010 to June 2014 and its financial contribution of \$500 million over the past five years. We will continue to honour our commitment by disbursing \$100 million up to 2016 for the socioeconomic development of Afghanistan, and \$100 million through a separate multilateral basket for the Afghan National Security Forces from 2015 to 2016.

The stability of Afghanistan is in the shared interests of the international community. We support the stability and development of Afghanistan based on a National Unity Government characterized by genuine partnerships and inclusiveness. We look forward to the key role played by the United Nations Assistance

Mission in Afghanistan and the sustained commitment of the international community for this purpose.

Mrs. Kavar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his briefing. I also wish to thank the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for their commitment and devotion. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, for their statements.

The Afghan people are witnessing their first democratic transition in modern history. Political leaders have moved beyond the impasse. That shows the people's willingness to work tirelessly for peace and stability on the path of democracy. We hope that these positive developments will be followed up by the creation of a Government that is in a position to tackle the political, economic and security challenges that Afghanistan has always faced — a Government that allows for an acceleration of the reform agenda, ensures the electoral timetables and promotes the rule of law, as well as human rights, in particular the rights of women and the fight against violence against women and crimes against women in general.

Afghanistan's efforts should be supported by the active and sustained engagement of the international community, in particular by the donor nations. Jordan commends the holding of the London Conference on Afghanistan, in which the Afghan leaders presented their new reform agenda, which is a very responsible plan in the area of development.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains difficult. We are concerned about the ongoing terrorism that the people of Afghanistan suffer. Jordan condemns in the strongest terms all terrorist attacks against civilians, the Afghan National Security Forces and international workers in Afghanistan. I note the terrorist attack against the French Institute and the attack on a British vehicle, as well as other cowardly terrorist acts, not to mention the killing of Afghans, including children. We reiterate the importance of providing lasting support to the Afghan National Security Forces, especially in the light of the reduction in the international presence in Afghanistan. We welcome the support provided by NATO, which will

provide training, advice and assistance to the Afghan defence forces.

We are pleased with the Afghan Government's commitment to improve its relations with its neighbours. We hope that regional cooperation will be improved and that a climate of understanding will reign between and among the countries of the region. We also hope that the security situation and the tensions that exist will be responsibly addressed. We support the regional forums aimed at strengthening peace and security and regional stability and at increasing economic opportunities. We commend the holding of the Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference, and we support the commitment of the United Nations and other partners to promote dialogue and confidence-building.

Regional cooperation plays a key role in the fight against the production, trafficking and sale of illicit narcotics, which threaten the socioeconomic future of the country as well as international peace and security. It would be advisable to also bear in mind the worrisome indicators that opium production has increased this year, which will fuel terrorism and extremism. Jordan welcomes all regional initiatives aimed at combatting narcotics, controlling the borders and promoting cooperation between and among law enforcement agencies and legal institutions. We also welcome the Afghan Government's efforts in the fight against drug trafficking and support its efforts to launch its plan to fight this scourge.

Jordan reaffirms the importance of the role played by the United Nations and of the need for the Security Council to stay informed of the most recent developments in such matters.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his first briefing to the Security Council. I extend my delegation's congratulations to him on his appointment to this post. We wish him and the entire United Nations family on the ground best success in ensuring continuous support to Afghanistan and wish that they may all stay safe. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, for his briefing and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his statement.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union later on.

In a few days, Afghanistan will turn another page in modern history. As of 1 January 2015, the responsibility for security in the country will be fully in the hands of the Afghan people. It is time now to quickly capitalize on the gains made during the last 13 years and advance in tackling the ongoing challenges, be they in political, peace and security, human rights or economic realms. Robust, visionary leadership from President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah will be essential. Lithuania, as a partner of Afghanistan for almost 10 years, was happy to see the reform package presented by the National Unity Government at the London Conference. It lays a firm foundation for the country's development during the transformation decade. We encourage the two leaders to proceed promptly to appointing and confirming senior Government officials. A strong and truly united Government is needed to meet the formidable challenges that lie ahead.

The economic situation, corruption and growing levels of opium production in Afghanistan remain issues of grave concern, challenging efforts to strengthen the country's stability and spur its development. We welcome President Ghani's initial steps, including investigation into the Kabul Bank fraud case, which show his determination to advance the rule of law. Immediate action on the part of the Government is needed to promote legal livelihoods and strengthen Afghanistan's social, economic and political fabric. That includes passing a credible budget, implementing measures to increase revenues and pursuing specific reforms aimed at improving the conditions for private sector investment.

The past few weeks have once again been marked by murderous attacks all over the State that have killed Afghan soldiers and civilians, including one in Kabul on the Institut Français d'Afghanistan and Isteqlol High School. We strongly condemn such brutal attacks on the Afghan population, including children, offer our deepest condolences and sympathy to all families of the victims and wish the injured a speedy recovery. The anti-Government elements attacking civilians with improvised explosive devices and on ground engagements, by means that include small-arms fire and suicide and complex attacks, must not be allowed to escape their responsibility under international humanitarian law. All perpetrators of such acts of violence must be brought to account.

We commend the Afghan National Security Forces for the strong willingness they have demonstrated to respond to the challenge of anti-Government elements. Continued international support and commitments are necessary to ensure that their capabilities are sustained. As the mission of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) winds down, we welcome the recent ratification of both the United States bilateral security and NATO status of forces agreements, which form a legal basis for post-2014 security assistance to Afghanistan, and the Council's adoption on 12 December of resolution 2189 (2014). The resolution constitutes a significant support to Afghanistan and the post-2014 allies' engagements there. My delegation thanks Australia for its leadership of the negotiating process for the resolution.

Lithuania supports and remains committed to the new NATO-led non-combat Resolute Support Mission. My country's contribution to the Mission will be one of its major commitments to the Alliance in 2015. My Government had already confirmed a contribution of \$500,000 to the Afghan National Army trust fund for 2015, according to the financial pledges recorded for the period 2015-2017. Lithuania is also contributing national experts to the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We believe it is important for UNAMA to take into consideration the consequences of ISAF's withdrawal from the provincial centres, as well as the changing security environment. We expect the safety of personnel to be assured in the new circumstances.

A strong security sector alone does not guarantee lasting peace and prosperity, however. The fact that President Ghani is emphasizing and prioritizing an Afghan-owned and -led reconciliation process is a welcome and much-needed step. The full inclusion of men, women, young people, civil society and minorities is key if reconciliation is to succeed. The meaningful participation of women, in particular, in Afghanistan's political and peace processes must be ensured. My delegation welcomes the outcome of the elections to the provincial councils, in which female candidates won 21 per cent of the seats. President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah's meetings with women representatives of civil society are a positive step towards women's greater inclusion in the country's social, political and economic life.

During her visit to Afghanistan, Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo noted with appreciation the political will evident in the attitude to promoting and protecting women's rights. Lithuania welcomes the launch of the first gender-based violence treatment protocol for health-care providers, as well as the training planned for medical personnel on survivor-centred care in Afghanistan. Despite such positive trends, deadly attacks, such as that on women's rights activist Shukria Barakzai, prove that there is still a long way to go before women can become truly free and secure in exercising their human and civil rights. Violence against women remains a major source of concern. Comprehensive and coherent data collection, as well as the effective implementation of laws and adequate resources for supporting women's shelters as a protective remedy, should be ensured without further delay.

In a final point, which Ambassador Tanin himself just raised, the positive engagement of Afghanistan's regional partners, both bilaterally and by way of regional initiatives such as the Istanbul Process, is crucial to building a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. We welcome President Ghani's emphasis on regional cooperation. The continued support of the international community through the efforts of UNAMA remains essential if the transformation decade is to bring a better life to each and every Afghan citizen.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to begin by thanking Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Yuri Fedotov, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for their presentations. I also thank the Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan for the statement he has just made, and associate myself in advance with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/876) emphasizes, Afghanistan has entered a decisive phase in its history. After a period of intense electoral activity, we can only applaud the success of the first democratic transition in the country's history. I too hope that President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah can quickly come to an agreement on forming a National Unity Government. The establishment of a new team will be crucial to achieving the reforms the country needs, and we took note of the priorities Ambassador Tanin just described — combating corruption, good governance and the promotion of economic and financial stability, in particular. This is encouraging,

and those intentions must now be translated into reality on the ground. In that regard, we would welcome the involvement of UNAMA, which gave the Afghan authorities exemplary support in order to enable it to bring the electoral process to a definitive conclusion.

On the political front, we would like to welcome the very encouraging recent developments. However, that should not let us forget that many challenges remain during a transition period marked by changes in the international community's support for Afghanistan. The main challenge is, of course, security. The insurgents are trying to make Afghans and their partners doubt the progress that has been achieved. The terrible attacks of the past few weeks are a disgusting attempt to destabilize the process under way. Like some previous speakers, I have in mind in particular the 11 December attack on the French cultural centre in Kabul, which targeted a place of culture and creativity well known to and much appreciated by Afghans. But we believe that Afghanistan is on the right track and that nothing can undermine the positive developments the country has seen. We will not renounce the values for which we fought alongside the Afghans for more than 10 years, and I am thinking in particular of the place and rights of women in Afghan society, as the representatives of Luxembourg and Jordan just emphasized.

In the context of security, featuring an insurgency that remains resilient, it is vital that regional partners continue to support Afghanistan. In that regard, we welcomed the recent Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in the framework of the Istanbul Process, held in Beijing in October, as a springboard for encouraging further regional cooperation on Afghanistan. The London Conference in early December also sent a very positive signal by enabling the new National Unity Government to present its economic programme and its reform plans, to which the international community has decided to give firm support. The support of the Alliance partners is evolving along with Afghanistan. Starting in 2015, NATO's advisory, training and assistance Resolute Support Mission that the Security Council recently welcomed in resolution 2189 (2014), will be present in order to continue to train Afghan forces.

I would like to conclude by raising a key challenge, namely, the fight against drug trafficking. We are particularly concerned by the continuing rise in opium production, as confirmed by the latest report of the Secretary-General and highlighted earlier by Mr. Yuri

Fedotov in his briefing. This trend must be reversed. We encourage the Afghan authorities to implement all the means necessary to combat drug production and trafficking, which represents a major threat to stability in Afghanistan, public health and development. We must not allow an illegal economy to prosper at the expense of the country's development.

We believe that UNAMA should play a major role in leading and coordinating the dialogue with the Afghan authorities on this topic of importance to the country's future. We are convinced that all United Nations entities involved in Afghanistan must consider the fight against drugs in designing and conducting their respective actions to ensure the necessary synergy in fighting that scourge in all its aspects. We particularly commend the actions of UNODC in that context.

Finally, I likewise wish to pay tribute to Mr. Kubiš for his work and commitment and to all UNAMA personnel working in what are well recognized as difficult conditions. The United Nations and UNAMA will play a major role in Afghanistan in the coming years on the front line of the commitment of the international community. Mr. Haysom can be assured of our continuing full support in his future work.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the convening of today's meeting by the Chadian presidency. I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Executive Director Fedotov for their briefings. I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

The year 2014 is crucial in terms of Afghanistan's political, security and economic transition. Since the beginning of the year, Afghanistan has smoothly concluded its presidential election and the formation of a new inclusive Government. It has been steadily promoting economic and social development.

The Afghan people are facing a new opportunity of unity and stability, peaceful reconstruction and development. A solid foundation has been prepared for a transformation that will begin in 2015. China congratulates the Afghan Government and the people on their achievement.

At the same time, a stable and prosperous Afghanistan with all of its ethnic groups living in harmony requires a continuing unwavering effort on the part of the Afghan Government and people and sustained attention and assistance on the part of the

international community. I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, the promotion of the national reconciliation process is key. In order to achieve peace and stability Afghanistan must commit to broad-based, inclusive political reconciliation. Chinese President Xi Jinping, in meeting with President Ghani Ahmadzai in October, emphasized that all parties should support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. It is China's hope that all parties in Afghanistan will demonstrate wisdom and sincerity, place the interests of the Afghan people before anything else and actively participate in the Afghan reconciliation process. Together with the international community, China intends to provide constructive assistance to promote the Afghan reconciliation process.

Secondly, maintaining a stable security situation is a prerequisite. At present, the Afghan security situation remains grim, with frequent violent attacks. The international community must continue to assist Afghanistan in the capacity-building of its national security and police forces. It must support the efforts of the Afghan security forces in maintaining domestic security and stability and effectively responding to any security threats or challenges in order to ensure conditions conducive to achieving Afghanistan's socioeconomic development and its citizens' well-being.

Thirdly, the realization of sustainable socioeconomic development is fundamental. Poverty is the breeding ground of extremism. China will increase its support to Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction efforts, help Afghanistan in formulating national socioeconomic development plans, train professionals in various fields, strengthen infrastructure construction and facilitate local economic development. The international community must also fulfil its commitment to assist Afghanistan in developing self-sufficiency capacities aimed at independent development.

Fourthly, strengthening international and regional cooperation is a priority. Afghanistan cannot realize development and prosperity without the support and assistance of the international community, especially the countries in the region. The international community should resolutely support Afghanistan's good-neighbour relationship with the countries in the region and support Afghanistan's participation in international and regional cooperation efforts with a

view to further integration in the regional economic sphere.

We support the continued leading role of the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in coordinating international assistance on behalf of Afghanistan. It is China's hope that UNAMA will strengthen communication, coordination and cooperation with the Afghan Government and enhance the confidence of the international community in Afghanistan's smooth transition process.

China is a good neighbour of Afghanistan. China is also a good friend of Afghanistan. China hopes to see a unified, stable, well-developed and friendly Afghanistan. China is firm in supporting active efforts to ensure Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction process.

During President Ghani Ahmadzai's visit to China at the end of October, China and Afghanistan issued a joint declaration on strengthening their strategic, cooperative partnership. The Chinese Government has decided to provide Afghanistan with grant assistance in the amount of ¥500 million in 2014, and ¥1.5 billion over the next three years.

To support capacity-building in Afghanistan, in the next five years China will assist Afghanistan in the training of 3,000 professionals from various fields and hold counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics training seminars.

China also hosted, in Beijing, the fourth Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference. China is actively committed to facilitating Afghanistan's regional cooperation and pushing for an early resolution of the issue of Afghanistan, with a view to achieving long-term peace and stability and economic and social development in the region.

China looks forward to working with the international community in its steadfast efforts to jointly support Afghanistan in its early realization of political reconciliation, economic recovery and long-term development and the security and prosperity of Afghanistan and the region.

Mr. Sana (Rwanda): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and Executive Director Yuri Fedotov for their briefings. Let me also take the opportunity to welcome Mr. Haysom upon his new assignment.

Our appreciation goes to the entire team of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their continuous support to the Afghan Government and people. I also thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his statement. Let me also pay tribute to Australia for its leadership during its two years as penholder on Afghanistan.

As we all know, a few months ago Afghanistan teetered on the brink of violence, following the disputed election result. We commend President Ghani Ahmadzai and Mr. Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer, for their brave decision and for preventing the country from slipping into violence. It was very possible for the country to have remained in crisis, had the two contenders not taken the right decision in parallel. In the same light, we commend the UNAMA leadership, the United States Government and the international community for their tireless efforts in bringing together both sides to end the political impasse for the benefit of the Afghan people and the entire region. We note and continue to encourage the positive working relationship between President Ghani and Mr. Abdullah.

Rwanda welcomes the reform agenda of President Ghani's Government. Extending an invitation to political opposition and armed groups to join an inter-Afghan dialogue is indeed timely and a cornerstone for the stability of Afghanistan. However, we are discouraged by the Taliban's rejection of the formation of the National Unity Government and its call for a continuation of the conflict.

We continue to encourage the Afghan leadership to maintain the spirit underlying the formation of an inclusive National Unity Government with the full participation of women. We echo President Ghani's call for Afghanistan's international partners to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. We also further urge religious leaders to play an active role in bringing peace to the country.

In less than 13 days, the Afghan National Security Forces will assume full security responsibility for the country. We believe that, since June 2013, the Afghan National Security Forces have demonstrated the capability of maintaining the country's security. Accordingly, the Bilateral Security Agreement signed on 30 September between the Afghan Government and the United States, as well as the status-of-forces agreement with NATO, are commendable. They will

provide the legal framework for continued military assistance to build the capacities of the Afghan national defence and security forces.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan has been facing and continues to face security challenges caused by insurgent terrorist groups that have caused many deaths including of innocent women and children. Multiple attacks have been taking place almost every day, increasing the number of civilian casualties. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/876) notes, this year alone has been one of the most violent since 2001. Rwanda strongly condemns the barbaric acts that have continued to claim Afghan lives. There can never be any justification whatsoever for that. We pay tribute to the Afghan security forces for demonstrating courage and bravery and countering the insurgency in that regard.

The economic situation in Afghanistan continues to have an adverse impact on the Government budget. However, we welcome President Ghani's announcement of a robust agenda, including commitment for reform to ensure the realization of Afghanistan's self-reliance. We commend the renewed partnership and its plan to refresh the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. It is important to strengthen governance, fight against corruption and implement policy reform.

We continue to appeal to the donor community to remain engaged, as witnessed at the London Conference, in fulfilling its commitment to support the new leadership as it strives to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Afghanistan. Regional cooperation and regional integration are imperative for bringing much needed foreign investment to Afghanistan, ensuring its economic viability and spurring economic growth.

In conclusion, the challenges that Afghanistan is facing today in its aspiration to be a self-reliant, peaceful, democratic and prosperous country for all Afghans require a serious commitment from the new leadership, the region and international partners. We fully support UNAMA and its partner agencies in fulfilling their mandates by providing assistance to the peace and rebuilding of Afghanistan. Rwanda will always remain in solidarity with the Afghan people and will continue to contribute to a stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his first

briefing to the Security Council this morning, and to welcome him into this important new role. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yuri Fedotov, for his briefing this morning, as well as Ambassador Tanin for his comments.

I will focus my statement today on three areas: the importance of international support for the new Government and its reform agenda, the launch of the Resolute Support Mission, and the United Nations future engagement in Afghanistan.

As Afghanistan prepares to enter the transformation decade, I applaud the new Afghan Government for its reform agenda as set out by President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah at this month's London Conference on Afghanistan. The agenda provides a credible framework for delivering economic security by tackling corruption, maintaining progress on national security, delivering political reform and consolidating progress on human rights. Those are the right priorities. At the London Conference, the international community demonstrated its clear commitment to Afghanistan's future and to the implementation of the reform agenda. We also commend President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah for their work to establish a National Unity Government. We now encourage the swift confirmation of Ministerial appointments to ensure that the momentum is maintained.

This is the last time the Security Council will meet before the conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force mission to Afghanistan. I want to pay tribute to the courage of the servicemen and servicewomen who have served to bring peace and security to Afghanistan, particularly, to those who sacrificed their lives in that task.

The recent attacks in Kabul against Afghan security personnel, international workers and innocent Afghan civilians bring home to us the gravity of the security challenge, as does the increase in civilian casualties, including, especially, children. But they also illustrate the courage and perseverance of those who have strived to achieve security and development in Afghanistan. Those men and women can take great pride in the fact that Afghanistan has seen its first ever peaceful transfer of power between elected leaders.

As the Afghan National Security Forces continue to bravely combat the insurgency, it is vital that we continue to provide support. We therefore welcome the

establishment of the NATO Resolute Support Mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces from the start of 2015. The Council showed its support for that Mission with the adoption of resolution 2189 (2014) last week.

A political settlement remains the best way to secure a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. We therefore welcome the recent dialogue between the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan and look forward to further progress. Afghanistan's neighbours will be central to that effort. We welcome the support of countries engaged in the Heart of Asia Process and other initiatives to promote security, trade and economic prosperity.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will play an ever more important role in Afghanistan next year, working to support the reform priorities of the new Afghan Government. Its provision of good offices to assist with Government formation, preparation for parliamentary elections and protecting the gains made on human rights must be central to its mandate. To do so effectively, UNAMA must also have the resources it needs to maintain its presence in the provinces.

In conclusion, we are entering a new chapter in our ongoing partnership with a sovereign and independent Afghanistan. There is no doubt that 2015 will be a challenging year, but it is heartening to see the commitment of the Afghan people and Government and the international community to building a stable, democratic and prosperous future for Afghanistan.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Mr. Nicholas Haysom. We congratulate him on his responsibilities and thank him for his briefing. We also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Yuri Fedotov, for his presence and briefing, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his statement.

My country applauds the successful creation of a National Unity Government and the first peaceful, democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan. We welcome the end to what was a prolonged electoral process and call particular attention to the role played by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. We also appreciate the good

offices of former President Mr. Hamid Karzai in the democratic process.

We wish to remind the new Government that in order to effectively address the political, economic and security challenges set out in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2014/876), it will be necessary to name and confirm other high officials of the Government. We hope that that part of the process will be resolved swiftly and without difficulties.

Chile supports a process of national reconciliation guided and led by all Afghans. In that context, we hope that the new Government will continue to implement resolution 1325 (2000) at all levels in order to guarantee the participation of women in decision-making. We also hope that women's needs will be duly addressed. We stress the importance of continuing to promote dialogue, inclusion and consensus among Afghans, an essential factor when it comes to building a country capable of standing on its own — a country with solid democratic institutions and subject to the rule of law.

We are concerned by the ongoing impact of the country's security situation on the Afghan civilian population, in particular on women and children. According to the Secretary-General's report, this has been one of the most violent years since 2001, and we are disturbed by the high number of civilian casualties and displaced communities.

Chile reiterates the need to strengthen the protection of civilians and condemns the use of force against unarmed civilians, by both pro- and anti-governmental elements. We recall that it is the fundamental responsibility of the new authorities to ensure the due protection of civilians and to prevent anti-Government forces from undermining confidence in the new Government before it has fully established itself.

In that regard, we commend the increase in the capacities and competencies of the Afghan national defence and security forces in preparation for the conclusion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force at the end of 2014. We hope that the Afghan authorities will be able to effectively take over responsibility for their country's security. We also welcome the agreement between NATO and Afghanistan to establish a post-2014 Resolute Support Mission in order to train, advise and assist the Afghan national defence and security forces.

Moreover, we share the concerns expressed by other members of the Council regarding the surge in opium production and hope that that trend will be reversed. We therefore support the proposals put forward by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

I conclude by expressing Chile's support for the efforts of the Afghan people to build a democratic State with full respect for the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also reiterate our call for the international community to continue to support the Afghan people by strengthening their capacities to address the security challenges their country faces. We believe that is equally essential for the development of Afghanistan and that of the region.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Haysom for presenting the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/876), as well as Mr. Fedotov for his substantive briefing on the issues with which he is tasked concerning the problem of drug trafficking. We listened attentively and with interest to the statement of Permanent Representative Tanin.

Not very long ago, Afghanistan completed a protracted presidential electoral marathon. For the first time, the Afghan people witnessed the peaceful transfer of power from one elected governmental authority to another. We wish the National Unity Government success and courage in addressing the remaining challenges. Now that the agreement between Mr. Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah has been signed and sealed, there are new possibilities to correct the situation and to lay the foundations for the country's gradual development, which for so many years has been held back by devastating war.

In that context, we would like to note the important role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is continuing to play in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The Mission's clear contribution to the electoral process and to the agreement reached between the two leading presidential candidates is beyond dispute. For our part, we are prepared to offer continued support to the activities of UNAMA, in coordination with the international community, for the benefit of the Afghan people. The particular importance of that mechanism was highlighted in last week's resolution 2189 (2014).

One of Afghanistan's gravest problems remains the production and illicit trafficking of drugs. The most recent data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are shocking. There was a 7 per cent increase in the area under cultivation with opium poppies compared to 2013, with a 9 per cent increase in average yield, while in the southern regions the average yield increased 27 per cent, for an overall 17 per cent rise in drug production. It is therefore vital to pay close attention to the links between the production of Afghan opiates and international terrorism, including its financing through drug revenues. There is abundant information on that matter in the recent report of the Monitoring Group of the Security Council Committee on sanctions concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, as well as in the conclusions of the Financial Action Task Force.

The dimensions of this problem are such that it represents a threat to the peace and stability of Afghanistan and the whole region well beyond its borders. In that regard, we consider the presidential statement concerning Afghan narcotics (S/PRST/2014/12), which the Council adopted in June at Russia's initiative, both timely and pertinent. It is now essential to develop practical measures aimed at eliminating the problems. We hope that a comprehensive review of the issues related to Afghan opiates will be part of the agenda of the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the global drug problem.

A useful contribution to measures to combat drug trafficking would be to broaden Afghanistan's cooperation in bilateral, regional, subregional and multilateral formats, first of all with its neighbours in the region, in order to take necessary steps towards developing alternative sources of income for its agricultural population.

For its part, Russia is reinforcing its efforts to combat illicit drug production and drug trafficking through regional structures, in particular through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), as well as through bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan. Moreover, we are continuing our practice of providing advanced training to Afghan narcotics police at the training institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia at Domodedovo, the Siberian Legal Institute and the Russian Federation's North-Western Drug Control Training Centre for Russian federal drug-control agents.

A significant contribution to solving the Afghan drug problem is also being made by the ongoing presence of the CSTO antinarcotic mechanism "Canal". Just this year, as a result of the special Canal operation known as "Southern Trap", more than 10 tons of Afghan opiates were seized.

In that regard, another question arises with regard to the complacency of the anti narcotic work of the soon-to-be-dissolved International Security Assistance Force. It would appear that the new NATO Resolute Support Mission is also in no hurry to act. Why is there no such problem in the context of the bilateral American-Afghan security agreement? We are very disappointed that the NATO countries for many years ignored the pragmatic suggestions of the Collective Security Treaty Organization for joint action in this area — yet that alliance is constantly trying to prove its usefulness. We have to admit that NATO lost one such opportunity that was very much needed.

The extremely tense security situation is the subject of our common concern. The country is experiencing perhaps the most difficult period of recent years. Since the beginning of the year there has been a rise of 20 per cent over the previous year in the number of civilians, Afghan army personnel and police killed at the hands of militants. The militants are behaving ever more boldly, sometimes capturing entire districts. The expected winter lull in their activity did not come. On the contrary, the number of terrorist attacks recently saw an almost twofold increase, and there has been a series of high-profile terrorist attacks in Kabul and in the country that showed that the Taliban retain a fearsome capacity. As before, Al-Qaida is still alive, and I will mention that, strange as it may seem, once again this fact was not reflected in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/876). The progressive concentration of extremists in the northern districts is worrisome, especially as that area was relatively calm until recently.

It is not surprising that we also did not wait for the comprehensive report on the outcomes of the activity of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which we had the right to expect and which was required from the alliance under the Security Council resolution. What we did receive was a very compact document entirely lacking in analysis of the security situation, yet ISAF had received a mandate specifically to improve the situation in this area under Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003). Pre-empting

this factual knowledge could lead an unsuspecting public to get the impression that the mandate has been fully implemented and the major problems solved. But that in no way reflects what is really going on in this country. By the way, NATO's report also contains nothing concrete about what ISAF actually did in terms of assisting Afghan law enforcement officers in the counter-narcotics area. One can conclude that nothing was done. An thoughtful conclusion in that sphere asserting that more should be done is more than a decade overdue.

Against the background of all that is happening, we note with satisfaction President Ghani's declaration on national reconciliation. The well-known triad of principles still retains its relevance: laying down arms, recognizing the Constitution of Afghanistan and severing ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. We must also not forget that there is a need for strict compliance with the Taliban and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

Many times we have announced that our country will work constructively with any leadership of Afghanistan that is supported by the Afghan people themselves. Once again, we would like to pay tribute to the perseverance and courage of the new President, Mr. Ghani, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Abdullah. We are sure that with the responsible assistance of the international community, led by the United Nations, they will be able to put the friendly Afghan people on the right path towards the peaceful building of an independent, self-sufficient and economically prosperous Afghanistan that is free from terrorism and narcotics-related crime.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Thank you, Foreign Minister Mahamat, for chairing this important meeting. Your presence here adds weight to an already weighty discussion. I welcome Special Representative Haysom to the Security Council and thank him for his briefing and his work on the ground in Afghanistan. We congratulate him on his appointment as the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. As he serves, he and his team can count on our full support. I also thank Mr. Fedotov for his informative briefing on illicit narcotics production in Afghanistan, an issue of substantial concern to the Council.

Afghanistan is in a very different place today than it where it was when the Council last met to discuss the country, on 18 September 2014 (see S/PV.7267). At that time, the election process was still being worked out,

and the Council urged candidates to work towards a durable compromise in the interest of the Afghan people. The candidates forged that compromise and formed a National Unity Government. Since taking office that Government has taken crucial steps to end the year on a positive note. The National Unity Government has set out a compelling reform agenda committing to improve governance, limit corruption, reintegrate refugees, promote sustainable development and defend and promote the human rights of all Afghans, with a special focus on women's rights. The Government is backing up its words with important actions, including reopening the Kabul Bank investigation, passing internationally compliant financial regulations, removing unqualified and corrupt Government personnel and tackling illicit trade, among other key efforts.

We look forward to President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah naming a cabinet soon, made up of people chosen on merit. We applaud their commitment to ensuring that the cabinet is representative of the Afghan people, including Afghan women.

The Afghan Government has shored up critical regional support for its agenda. At the Heart of Asia/Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in Beijing in October, neighbouring countries committed to doing their part to strengthen Afghanistan's security and prosperity, which is in the interest of the region's stability and development. President Ghani has undertaken important visits to improve relationships with neighbours, including Pakistan.

Support for Afghanistan's continued progress also comes from beyond the immediate region. At the London Conference at the beginning of December, more than 70 donor States affirmed their commitment of over \$16 billion in assistance to Afghanistan through 2016. That support is critical to building upon the hard-earned gains made in Afghanistan since 2001. In that time, school enrolment has increased tenfold, with nearly 10 million children now signed up. Forty per cent of students are girls — something that would have been unthinkable under Taliban rule. Life expectancy has improved dramatically. Maternal mortality has fallen from 16 per cent to 3 per cent, while under-five mortality has dropped from 25 per cent to less than 10 per cent. Women can now not only walk in public without a male relative by their side, but also can become doctors who treat male and female patients. Women hold 28 per cent of the seats in the parliament of Afghanistan.

The United States is committed to supporting that ongoing progress. Among other contributions, our Government is providing more than \$107 million this year to help refugees returning to Afghanistan, because we have seen the inspiring contributions they can make to their country. For just one example, look at Fereshta Abbasi. Her parents fled Afghanistan for Iran before she was born, and her family did not return until Fereshta was 12. But she was determined to excel in school and pursue a career. With her family's support, she attended Herat University's law school, where she was the only woman on the school's moot court team. After graduating she went to work in her country's Ministry of Women's Affairs, which never would have been conceivable under Taliban rule. Now she is ensuring that other girls and women have the same opportunity she had and face fewer obstacles in their paths.

Of course, much work remains, including on women's rights. Last month the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women visited Afghanistan. While she was encouraged by the Government's commitment to seeking to end violence against women, Special Rapporteur Manjoo also found that "insecurity, pervasive levels of gender-based violence and an ever present climate of fear has had a disproportionate impact on the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights of women and girls" in Afghanistan. Women and girls, she said, continue to endure domestic abuse by husbands and relatives, exchange marriages, incest, honour crimes, targeted killings and discrimination at home and at work, as well as daunting obstacles to seeking redress for those and other problems.

Let me turn to the very large challenge of security. At the end of this month, the United States and our NATO allies and partners from around the world will conclude the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission. Over 13 years, troops and civilian personnel from more than 50 countries have worked alongside Afghan partners to root out terrorism and try to build a more stable and a more secure Afghanistan. More than 2,200 Americans and more than 1,200 citizens of other ISAF coalition countries have given their lives working to defend and empower the Afghan people.

Afghanistan continues to face serious threats to security, as evinced by horrific terrorist attacks like the one carried out on 23 November when a suicide bomber detonated an improvised explosive device at a volleyball

tournament in Paktika province. More than 50 people were killed, many of them children. It was part of the increase in targeting of innocents by anti-Government armed groups, which has resulted, as we have heard, in the largest number of civilian casualties this year since 2008. Those horrific, depraved attacks show more than just the ongoing risks; they show why it is so important that the Afghan Government succeed and why those responsible for such attacks must be neutralized and brought to justice. NATO and its partners will continue to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces through the Resolute Support Mission, allowing brave Afghan soldiers and police to continue to stand up to extremists and work to protect their fellow citizens.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this important debate. I would like to welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and thank him for his inaugural briefing. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, for his very informative briefing. I recognize the presence of Ambassador Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, thank him for his statement.

The peaceful resolution of the post-election political crisis in Afghanistan marks a very significant development in the political process of the country. We commend the United Nations, the United States and former President Hamid Karzai for their mediation efforts, which led to the agreement between President Ghani and Mr. Abdullah to form a National Unity Government. We welcome that agreement and note that it has led to a considerable reduction of tensions in Afghanistan. It has also fostered an atmosphere of optimism about the country's future. We urge both leaders to build a scaffold around this remarkable achievement by expediting the formation of the Cabinet to execute President Ghani's reform agenda.

With regard to the reform agenda, we welcome its focus on governance, the rule of law, regional engagement, national reconciliation and the fight against corruption. We believe that placing appropriate priority on national reconciliation is indeed a valid step in the right direction. We take positive note of the efforts of President Ghani to facilitate peace talks, especially with religious leaders. His invitation to the Taliban and other militant groups to join the inter-Afghan dialogue is a strident effort towards reconciliation. We urge all

Afghans to embrace dialogue as the path to lasting peace and stability in the country.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains volatile. The recent wave of attacks against civilians carried out by the Taliban and other terrorist groups serves to underscore the challenges that the country continues to face in terms of security. We condemn in the strongest terms all acts of violence against civilian populations. We pay special tribute to the Afghan Security Forces for their demonstrated ability to clear and recover contested areas from insurgents. International assistance to Afghanistan will remain crucial in sustaining the ability of the Afghan security forces to fight the terrorists, insurgents and other criminal elements destabilizing the country.

We note the pledge by Afghanistan's NATO allies and partners to support the country's security forces with approximately \$5.1 billion per annum until the end of 2017. It is our hope that this assistance will provide the much-needed support to help Afghanistan prepare to assume full financial responsibility for its security forces by 2024, as envisaged under the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership.

Turning to regional cooperation, we believe that this is critical to resolving the crisis in Afghanistan and surmounting the challenges confronting neighbouring States in the region. President Ghani has demonstrated the critical importance he attaches to cooperation with his neighbours through various engagements at the bilateral and multilateral levels. We take note of the outcome of the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan, held in October in Beijing. The meeting provided a platform for addressing issues, including terrorism, drug-trafficking, poverty and violent extremism, that threaten the peace and security of the region.

The meeting between President Ghani and Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan was also significant. It presented an opportunity for both leaders to deliberate on the security challenges confronting both countries. We urge them to strengthen their engagement to enable them to find lasting solutions to the cross-border threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In terms of counter-narcotics, we welcome the engagement of Mr. Fedotov with the Afghan authorities. The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/876) indicates that, while progress has been made by local authorities in fighting drug-trafficking, considerable challenges

still remain. One of those challenges is the increase in the area under opium cultivation, as a consequence of which opium production in 2014 may increase by 17 per cent. Nigeria believes that an integrated counter-narcotics approach is necessary to check the production of opium. With the crop generating as much as \$850 million in revenues, it is clear that it poses a grave threat as a source of terrorist financing in Afghanistan, and indeed beyond. Concerted national, regional and international action to address this challenge is vital and must be stayed and sustained in that direction.

Mr. Oyarzábal (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/876). I take this opportunity to congratulate him on his appointment and to wish him the greatest of success as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan for their briefings.

When the Council last considered the situation in Afghanistan, on 18 September (see S/PV.7267), we were awaiting the results of the second round of the presidential elections. Since then, an agreement was reached between the two presidential candidates, confirming Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as the new President of Afghanistan and of Mr. Abdullah Abdullah as Chief Executive Officer. Through Ambassador Tanin, we congratulate the Government and the people of Afghanistan on this important demonstration of civil democracy. This, the first such peaceful and democratic transfer of power between two elected leaders in the history of Afghanistan, is a major turning point in the political transition in the country.

The challenges facing the new authorities are both well known and overwhelming, including the widespread desire for peace on the part of the Afghan people and cordial relations with neighbouring countries in the region. In that regard, we welcome the announcement by the new Government of its commitment to the launching of a national peace process in Afghanistan. It is crucial that the political opposition, especially the Taliban, join the inter-Afghan dialogue so the country may begin overcoming its violent past, which has claimed more than 32,000 Afghan and foreign lives, including those of some 15,000 civilians, in addition to

the thousands of Taliban victims since only 2007, when United Nations records began.

We note that during the reporting period there was a reduction in the number of security incidents as compared to the same period in the year 2013, thereby reversing the trend that we had been observing. We hope that this new trend solidifies. While it is a welcome fact that the Afghan security forces have demonstrated the capability to control insurgent activities, Argentina does not believe that there can be a purely military solution to the conflict without addressing the deep-rooted causes of the conflict. Acts as abhorrent as those we saw last Tuesday — when the Taliban killed 127 people, the majority of them children, in a school in Peshawar — serve to underscore the importance of regional cooperation when it comes to ushering in prosperity and stability, not just for Afghanistan but also for its neighbours in the region.

Argentina is just as worried about the increase in the number of civilian victims resulting from aerial operations carried out by international military forces, including 148 children during the reporting period. In that vein, we reiterate the obligation of such operations being made in full compliance with the obligations arising from international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Argentina supports efforts aimed at preventing the production and trafficking of drugs in Afghanistan. In that regard, we know that regional cooperation is essential, both in law enforcement and criminal justice as well as in the promotion of a reduction in demand. It is worrisome that in 2014 there has been an increase in the opium harvest, and we underscore the important role that the United Nations plays in monitoring the situation surrounding drugs in Afghanistan and in supporting national efforts. It is also important to coordinate the efforts of the various agencies of the United Nations system in order to implement a comprehensive approach on this matter.

The United Nations role continues to be crucial when it comes to helping the future National Unity Government meet its obligations in the areas of security and development as well as in its cooperation in the coordination of humanitarian assistance and in the fight against the production and trafficking of drugs. We fully support the work of the UNAMA and of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMA.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, as President of the Security Council, for organizing today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I also thank the Secretary-General for the quarterly report (S/2014/876) on the situation in Afghanistan and welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom.

Afghanistan has just gone through a historic political transition. We welcome the establishment of the National Unity Government, led by President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. The people of Afghanistan have shown tremendous patience and forbearance, which made the National Unity Government agreement possible. I have no doubt that the Afghan political leadership will keep the expectations of the Afghan people in mind as they undertake the difficult tasks that lie ahead, including the early formation of the Government, consistent with the National Unity Government agreement and the task of electoral reforms and organizing the constitutional *loya jirga*. I wish to place on record my Government's appreciation for the special role played by the Special Representative in Afghanistan during this process. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) must continue to play a leading role in shaping and coordinating the international community's efforts to assist Afghanistan's political and economic reconstruction process.

The scourge of terrorism and extremism continues to threaten Afghanistan's peace and stability. That terrorists and extremist groups have continued to survive despite the immense military pressure that is being brought on them by the Afghan National Security Forces only underscores the fact that these groups continue to benefit from support from beyond Afghanistan's borders and continue to access resources from transnational terrorists and criminal networks. The latest Secretary-General's report mentions that, of late, the Afghan Government has been facing a sustained and determined challenge in securing key districts across many provinces that remain under insurgent pressure. It is alarming to see statistics like the overall number of security incidents this year increase by 10.3 per cent, as compared to a similar period in 2013. The Special Representative must therefore continue to focus his attention on this serious issue. We cannot afford to

lose sight of the fact that the main threat to peace and stability in Afghanistan is terrorism. The attacks in Kabul, Sydney and Peshawar only serve to underline the fact that terrorists do not respect borders and make no differentiation between States. They pose a common threat to humankind.

In the recently concluded London Conference on Afghanistan, we all agreed that Afghanistan is entering a new phase in its economic transition. In today's global economic situation, when Government budgets are strained and when the sentiment of aid fatigue exists in most traditional donor countries, Afghanistan's economic transition will have to be primarily private-sector led. As a lead country of the trade, commerce and investment confidence-building measure under the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, India has gained some experience on the issue. One of the consistent messages we are receiving from the private-sector businesses that are serious about entering the Afghan market is that while security is an issue that can at times be managed, Afghanistan's lack of connectivity to seaports and to the faster growing economic regions of Asia is an insurmountable constraint. India feels that securing Afghanistan's access to all existing regional maritime ports and developing more effective transit agreements between Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours, and faithfully implementing the existing ones, are vital priorities. India is at present in discussion with the Governments of Afghanistan and Iran to examine how the existing Port of Chabahar in Iran can be developed to support such a strategy. We feel that when this project takes off, there will be significant immediate gains for reconstruction activities in the western regions of Afghanistan.

UNAMA has an important role to play in supporting the activities of 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 required professional and physical resources to reach much-needed humanitarian and development assistance to the remotest corners of Afghanistan.

This is a critical decade of transformation for Afghanistan. A united, stable, prosperous and

independent Afghanistan is in the interests of the region and the international community. India is committed to helping Afghanistan achieve that objective.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Ahmed Khan (Pakistan): At the outset, allow me to thank everyone for all the words of support and sympathy that we have received and heard on the horrendous terror attack in Pakistan.

We welcome to the Council Mr. Haysom as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We thank him for his briefing. We look forward to working with him in support of Afghanistan's decade of transformation, and I would like to assure him of Pakistan's fullest cooperation. I would also like to thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing today and, in the same breath, pay tribute to former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his excellent stewardship of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Pakistan would like to express its appreciation for the statement made by Ambassador Zahir Tanin this morning.

The security transition in Afghanistan is now under way. We believe that the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States and the status-of-forces agreement with NATO will provide the legal framework for continued international military assistance post-2014. The support expressed in resolution 2189 (2014) is another positive signal. The International Security Assistance Force will end its mission in Afghanistan in approximately 13 days. Afghan forces will resume full responsibility for security. The Resolute Support Mission will be there to advise, train and assist. These are historic moments, and we welcome the seamless transition.

The recent visit by President Ashraf Ghani to Pakistan, preceded by the visit of our adviser on national security and foreign policy and high-level contacts in both the civil and military fields, has contributed to an auspicious beginning — a resetting of the relationship, as the Secretary-General stated. We have initiated actions to deepen security cooperation, promote bilateral trade, streamline transit trade issues, build a strong economic relationship and enhance regional economic cooperation. We welcome the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference, held in Beijing, and have offered to host its fifth Ministerial Conference in Pakistan.

Let me reiterate that we fully support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We appreciate its good offices, capacity-building and coordination of assistance roles. We hope that it will continue to contribute to the peace and stability of Afghanistan, which is our common goal.

I would also like to reiterate what Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proposed for the consideration of the international partners at the London Conference on Afghanistan. First, we must send a clear message of deeper engagement with Afghanistan. Secondly, we must help address the urgent fiscal crisis and provide sustained financial assistance throughout the transformation decade for building a secure and self-reliant Afghanistan. Thirdly, we must strengthen efforts in the fight against narcotics production and trafficking. Fourthly, we must support the new Government's desire to bring back the 5 million Afghan refugees living abroad by helping to create conditions conducive to their sustainable reintegration. Finally, we must implement the vision of Afghanistan as a land bridge by supporting communications and energy corridors.

I would like to end by underlining that terrorism is a common enemy. It must be fought with common endeavours, without any distinction.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): At the outset, allow me to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing. While voicing, once again, our appreciation for the tireless efforts and dedication of his predecessor, Mr. Ján Kubiš, I would like to wish Mr. Haysom a successful term in office. The effective role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) under his able leadership will continue to be a key element in supporting the people and Government of Afghanistan in the period ahead. I would also like to thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for their statements.

Afghanistan is going through a crucial phase in terms of its political, security and economic transformation. The year 2014 marked several milestone events in the process of consolidating Afghanistan's sovereignty and national unity. In this context, the outcome of the presidential elections signified a success for all

of the Afghan people, as it demonstrated their strong will and courage to determine their own destiny. The decision to establish a National Unity Government has clearly displayed the Afghan people's determination as a whole to carry their country forward. We believe that Afghanistan has emerged stronger from those experiences. We welcome and support the robust agenda the new Government of Afghanistan has embarked upon, including in the fields of governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption, and its efforts for an Afghan-led and -owned reconciliation process.

It is commendable that, by the end of this year, Afghan National Security Forces will assume full security responsibility for their people and country. The year 2015 will be pivotal in the consolidation of the achievements reached thus far. Therefore, continued support for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces and wider international cooperation with Afghanistan will still be of the utmost importance. Turkey remains committed to standing by Afghanistan in this process. The official visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Afghanistan in October 2014, whereby a strategic partnership and friendship agreement was signed between the two countries, renewing the previous agreement of 1928, is a recent testament of that commitment.

The changing nature and scope of NATO's engagement with Afghanistan in the period ahead was outlined during the NATO Summit held in Wales in September 2014. We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 2189 (2014) on the NATO Resolute Support Mission, which will be launched to provide training, advice and assistance to the Afghan National Security Forces. In addition to Turkey's financial pledges for the funding of the Afghan National Security Forces, Turkey will assume the framework nation role for Kabul in the Resolute Support Mission. Turkey will also undertake responsibility for Kabul International Airport. As would be recalled, Mr. Ismail Aramaz, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Afghanistan, has recently been appointed as the next NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan.

We deeply regret and condemn the terrorist attacks that have been perpetrated in Afghanistan in the reporting period, which have claimed many lives, including those of civilians. We are confident that those attacks will not succeed in derailing Afghanistan's efforts to achieve a peaceful transformation.

The gains of the past 13 years in the country, including in the fields of security, democracy, governance, capacity- and institution-building, economic development and human rights, have prepared a good foundation for the country's move to the next step. Nevertheless, the international community's continuing support is vital for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan that can effectively serve the needs of its people. The London Conference on Afghanistan, held on 4 December, provided a timely opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan to set out its vision for reform and for the international community to demonstrate enduring solidarity and support for Afghanistan.

At a critical juncture of political, security and economic transformation in Afghanistan, the importance of regional cooperation and commitment has further increased. We welcome all bilateral and multilateral dialogue and cooperation efforts aimed at promoting an environment conducive to the enhancement of regional collaboration. With that understanding, the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, held in Beijing, yielded a good opportunity for furthering efforts for enhanced regional cooperation. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/876) highlights, the continued forward momentum of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process is indeed encouraging.

The international community's solidarity and continued commitment will strengthen the hopes of the Afghan people for a bright future. Turkey will continue to contribute to a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Thöresson (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union, but would like to take this opportunity to also make a few additional remarks.

I would like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/876). Let me also welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and thank him for his comprehensive and substantive briefing. Our thanks also go to Mr. Fedotov and Ambassador Tanin for their statements.

Much has been achieved in Afghanistan during the past 13 years. The country has come a long way and the Afghan men and women can take great pride in this. Earlier this year the Afghan people revealed their strong desire for democracy by turning up in great numbers to vote in what became the first democratic transfer of power in the history of Afghanistan. More children, especially young girls, are enrolled in schools and access to health care has increased significantly since 2001. This year Afghanistan has also taken full responsibility for its own security.

Despite the progress, reality continues to remind us that there is certainly work left to do. The election process illustrated that additional improvements are needed to better consolidate democracy and governance. The human rights situation still has a long way to go, largely due to an ineffective justice system. Afghanistan is still one of the worst places in the world to be born a woman. It is time that Afghan women receive the opportunity to become full and equal members of society.

The production and smuggling of narcotics are among the primary drivers of the conflict in Afghanistan. Corruption is another great obstacle present at all levels of society. The rule of law must be strengthened and the culture of impunity must end.

President Ghani Ahmadzai and the Afghan leadership have demonstrated a strong commitment to change by outlining a rigorous and bold reform agenda. This was clearly displayed during the successful London Conference on Afghanistan on 4 December. The international community now calls for an expeditious implementation of these reforms.

The end to violence and conflict and the establishment of a safe and secure environment are prerequisites for achieving real and sustainable development results in Afghanistan. This should be accomplished through an inclusive peace and reconciliation process. It will require serious efforts to ensure that such a process can take root. It needs to be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led, but the international community should stand ready to offer its assistance.

Sweden believes that regional cooperation and constructive engagement from Afghanistan's neighbours are paramount for creating an environment conducive to peace and development. We welcome the intentions and actions taken by the Afghan leadership to strengthen the ties with neighbouring countries.

Drawing upon the recent Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in Beijing, there now seems to be an opportunity to solidify a foundation for genuine regional cooperation.

In one form or another, Sweden has provided assistance to Afghanistan for more than three decades. Today, Afghanistan is one of the largest recipients of Swedish development aid. As we approach the transformation decade, our focus on civilian matters is becoming increasingly dominant. At the London Conference on Afghanistan, we reaffirmed our long-term support, as stated in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Sweden stands ready to contribute with an indicative volume of \$1 billion to \$1.2 billion in development assistance over the next decade.

Earlier this year, Sweden also established a new development strategy for the period up to 2019. Our focus will primarily be on strengthening Afghanistan's own ability to improve the economy, enhance democratic governance, promote equality and improve the human rights situation, in particular the situation for women and children.

Sweden has over the years made a considerable contribution to the International Security Assistance Force. Building on these efforts, we aim to also participate in the Resolute Support Mission, which will be launched on 1 January 2015.

Sweden would like to express its full support for the important role played by United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and by all the United Nations agencies in supporting the Afghan people and coordinating the international community's assistance. Beyond 2014, the presence of the United Nations in Afghanistan will become even more important.

While our expectations are high for the Afghan Government to deliver on its reform commitments, these expectations can hardly compare with the appeals for improvement coming from Afghan men and women. The time is ripe now to achieve concrete results, and Sweden is ready to play its part. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the new Afghan Government as we enter the transformation decade.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as 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/2014/876), Special Representative Haysom and Executive Director Fedotov for their briefings, and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

I would also like to express my heartfelt condolences to our Pakistani colleagues, to the Government of Pakistan and to the families of the victims for the heinous attack on the military school in Peshawar, which left us all in shock. The European Union stands fully committed to tackling the threat posed by terrorism and ready to assist the Pakistani Government.

We saw recently at the London Conference on Afghanistan that the international community remains committed to assisting the Government and the people of Afghanistan. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the United Nations agencies remain critical to the effective coordination and delivery of international assistance to Afghanistan. The role of the United Nations will be even more important in the coming years in building Afghan capacity, and thereby supporting effective and accountable administration across the country as the international presence decreases.

The European Union believes that it is the right time for the relationship between the international community and Afghanistan to take a different shape. Afghans have increasingly taken the lead responsibility in all areas across the country and have shown increasing willingness to engage in regional cooperation. The European Union and its member States have already signalled their intention to change the way they operate in Afghanistan. Our new strategy puts the emphasis on supporting the development of Afghanistan's own institutions — institutions critical for ensuring that the legacy of the international engagement will be an Afghanistan that is able to stand on its own two feet, an Afghanistan that enables its people to live in the peace and prosperity to which they legitimately aspire.

The London Conference provided a good opportunity to hear and see the plans that the National Unity Government has for further progress and increased self-reliance. The European Union believes that the vision put forward in the “Realizing Self-Reliance” reform paper can be the basis for renewed progress in Afghanistan. At the same time, it is also critical that efforts be made to ensure progress on peace and reconciliation. It is imperative now that President Ghani Ahmadzai and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah appoint a new Cabinet as soon as possible. One of the first tasks of the new ministers will be to substantiate the plans set out in the Government’s vision to allow for consultation with Afghans and the international community in advance of the senior officials meeting foreseen to take place in Kabul in 2015.

In developing the details for the meeting, the EU would like to highlight three areas that would benefit from particular attention.

First, with regard to justice and the rule of law, while we realize the challenges they pose, we find it is vital that Afghans see the development of a system where every Afghan stands equal before the law. The key to guaranteeing greater equality for women in Afghanistan is not just to have more laws saying they are equal, but the consistent implementation of the laws that are already in place. Some important appointments have already been made, but now Afghanistan needs a concerted effort to drive reform across the whole of the justice system.

Secondly, Afghans must be empowered to keep their Government accountable at all levels. That requires a programme to improve subnational governance that transfers decision-making authority and resources from the national level to the provinces, from the provinces to the districts and from the districts to the communities.

Thirdly, Afghans must be assured that security will be maintained. Further strengthening the capacity to address the remaining security challenges will be a prerequisite for additional progress. The sustainable economic reconstruction of Afghanistan largely depends upon a safe and stable Afghanistan, as well as a stable and conducive regional environment. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of the Resolute Support Mission, which will train, advise and assist the Afghan national defence and security forces at the invitation of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, these changes, together with those set out in more detail in the paper provided by the Government of Afghanistan, can contribute to the real change we all want to see. Afghans themselves are really the ones taking the decisions and shaping their destiny.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): To save time, I will give an abbreviated version of my statement, the full text of which will be circulated by the Secretariat.

First, however, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening today’s meeting. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, whom Japan warmly congratulates on his appointment as the new Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), together with his deputies, Mr. Mark Bowen and Mr. Tadamichi Yamamoto. We look forward to seeing UNAMA continue to play an important role in providing international assistance to Afghanistan on its path towards self-reliance. I would also like to thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his briefing, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his statement.

Afghanistan stands at a critical juncture. Under the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, the new Government must now begin to tackle numerous challenges. In the area of security, the drawdown at the end of this year of the International Security Assistance Force will mark a watershed in Afghanistan’s road to self-reliance. The Afghan people have to realize that they must demonstrate ownership and take the lead in ensuring their own security, for which the Afghan national defence and security forces should now assume full responsibility.

Afghanistan’s future is in the hands of the Afghan people themselves. Japan therefore considers their ownership and efforts to help themselves very important. The transformation decade of 2015 through 2024 presents Afghanistan with a historical opportunity for determining its own self-reliant future. Japan stands ready to support the Afghan people as long as they work in earnest for a better future. We also emphasize the perspective of human security in focusing on each individual’s fulfilment and empowerment. We believe

that ordinary Afghan citizens aspire to a peaceful and prosperous life close to their families and friends. That aspiration is what provides the driving force for peace and stability, and it is from those perspectives that Japan has been actively engaged in the country's reconstruction process. I would like to touch on two points that are priorities for Japanese assistance.

The first concerns public order and security. From my own experiences in post-conflict countries, I know how crucial law and order are to reconstructing local communities, where local people must assume the primary responsibility for their own communities. It is therefore essential that the Afghan people become empowered and capable of ensuring public order and security. That is why Japan has been supporting the strengthening of Afghan law-enforcement capabilities. Through our contribution to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan of the United Nations Development Programme, amounting to a total of \$1 billion, we helped to double the number of Afghan police officers between 2008 and 2012. We have also implemented numerous capacity-building programmes, providing, for instance, financial and technical assistance to a four-month training programme for about 200 female Afghan police officers that has been under way in Turkey since last month.

My second point concerns sustainable development. We believe that poverty reduction and sustainable growth are essential to people's empowerment. A sound and prosperous economy helps address the root causes of terrorism and extremism. In that context, we would like to underscore the strategic importance of agriculture from the perspective of human security. Approximately 80 per cent of Afghanistan's total population is engaged in agricultural work, a sector that has the biggest potential for job creation in the country. The presence of empowered Afghan farmers will provide a solid foundation for strong and resilient local communities, which is what Japan is aiming for. Since rice production has great potential for the Afghan economy, our assistance projects include research and development on rice cultivation and improving irrigation facilities. Japan has recently also made contributions in the area of veterinary medicine by providing \$19 million through the Food and Agriculture Organization to help control foot-and-mouth disease.

Furthermore, I would like to point out that developing basic infrastructure is also an essential component in sustainable development. Infrastructure

connects people and enables trade and investment to expand. We have been helping to construct or improve roads, such as that between Kabul and Kandahar, as well as airports, including Kabul International Airport and the airport in Bamyan. The new Government's emphasis on improving connectivity between Afghanistan and its surroundings is further testimony to the relevance of our approach. We hope Japan's support will significantly contribute to reinvigorating local communities and reintegrating Afghanistan into the regional and global economies.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of a strong partnership between Afghanistan and the international community. The London Conference on Afghanistan offered a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the solid bond that unites us. Japan welcomes the fact that most of the participants, Afghan and international partners alike, reaffirmed their commitments to the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Since 2012, Japan, as the second-largest contributor of aid to Afghanistan, has already disbursed more than \$2 billion of the \$3 billion it committed to. In the understanding that the new Afghan Government will deliver on the commitments it made under the Framework, we will make good on ours. As Afghanistan makes the crucial transition to peace and prosperity, Japan remains committed to offering its support, in cooperation with the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like the Ambassador of Japan, I will deliver a shortened statement, for which the full text will be posted on the Mission's web page.

I would like to thank Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and my good friend Ambassador Tanin for their statements.

I also fully associate myself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

My statement will focus on four areas. I will first discuss Afghanistan from the Spanish perspective, and Spain's commitments regarding Afghanistan. Secondly, I have some comments on the internal situation in the country. Thirdly, I will look at things from an international perspective, concluding with a firm condemnation of terrorism.

Concerning Spain and Afghanistan, there have been two very important developments in recent days in my country. First, the Vice-President of Spain, Ms. Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, visited Afghanistan to meet with the Spanish troops in the country and the Afghan authorities. It was a significant and relevant gesture.

Secondly, this past Friday the Council of Ministers approved a decision to again participate in Afghanistan, via the NATO Resolute Support Mission, in accordance with resolution 2189 (2014). We trust that the Congress of Deputies will adopt the decision in the days ahead.

Thirdly, concerning Afghanistan's domestic situation, we have repeatedly spoken in this Chamber about the recent elections, the important progress in women's participation and the election results. Now we are facing a new and important challenge, namely, that the Government fully establish its Cabinet. That step is critical and absolutely urgent.

Fourthly, from the international perspective, the London Conference just took place. There we were able to warmly welcome the reform agenda presented by the Government of Afghanistan. The priorities established by the Government of President Ghani comprise the toolkit of the Afghan Government and the international community. Among the priorities, the Spanish delegation has underlined two of particular importance. The first is support for rule-of-law initiatives; the second concerns strengthening progress in ensuring the rights of women and girls.

I also take this opportunity to emphasize the importance we attach to the Beijing Ministerial Conference and the determined support of Spain in the Istanbul Process where, as Council members know, we participate in the support group.

Lastly, my most vigorous and emphatic words go to condemn and reject the recent terrorist attacks committed in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, which represent the most bitter and sad face of humankind.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): Over the past year, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has been instrumental in supporting Afghanistan's election process. It and the wider United Nations system will continue to play a key role as Afghanistan proceeds on its journey of transformation.

The formation of the Afghan National Unity Government through Afghanistan's first peaceful democratic transfer of power was a historic milestone — momentous for the Afghan people and for the international community alike. Canada is encouraged by the new Government's first few months. President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah have embraced cooperation and secured important progress towards Afghanistan's future stability.

Continuing cooperation that delivers practical outcomes will be the key to managing the challenges ahead. Central to this, President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah must together ensure effective implementation of vital reforms to reduce poverty, strengthen the economy, improve governance, eradicate corruption, protect human rights — especially women's rights — and improve participation in politics and society, particularly for women and minority groups. The sooner the National Unity Government delivers a Cabinet, the better positioned it will be to act on these challenges.

I can assure the Council that Afghanistan will not stand alone in its undertakings. Since 2001, Canada has stood with Afghanistan. Our troops have fought and died for security and freedom for the Afghan people; we have supported the development of Afghanistan's constitutional and democratic processes; and we have funded programmes that have improved the lives of ordinary Afghan people, particularly women and children.

We remain committed to these goals. Canada will be contributing \$330 million over three years, starting in 2015, to help sustain the Afghan National Security Forces in order to further the aims of stability and security. Afghanistan remains a country of focus for Canada's international development efforts, and between 2014 and 2017 we will invest \$227 million in the future of Afghanistan's children and youth. We will solidify and expand the gains made in maternal, newborn and child health. We will assist in providing education to children and young people, and in emboldening women's civil and political participation, human rights and economic empowerment. We expressed confidence in President Ghani's reform agenda by investing \$20 million towards the Government's fiscal gap, of which \$10 million were new funds, and the other \$10 million reprofiled from the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

We recognize that the international footprint in Afghanistan will change in 2015. Canada welcomes the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2189 (2014), recognizing the importance of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, which will provide ongoing training, advice, and assistance to the Afghan Government beginning in 2015. We further welcome the Afghan Government's reaffirmation of its commitment to the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, set out at the Tokyo Conference in 2012, and the consensus it reached with the international community on a process to refresh the Framework at next year's senior officials meeting, based on the reform programme and priorities of the Afghan Government.

(spoke in French)

In the meantime, Afghanistan's regional partners must continue to work together to manage security and development challenges through the established frameworks and in accordance with international law. When States flout international law by annexing or illegally intervening in other States' territory, we all suffer the ensuing effects of the conflict and instability. An international rules-based order benefits us all; chaos erupts without it. Each and every Member State has the responsibility to abide by international law, including to act against terrorists and militant groups, and to ensure that their territories do not become bases for such operations.

Let me dwell further on this point. There is no distinction to be made between a good terrorist and a bad terrorist, for all terrorism is inherently evil. There is consequently no role for terrorism in the conduct of international relations. Terrorist forces may have tainted Afghanistan's recent history, but we are determined that they will not decide its future. The Afghan population has made plain its desire for a peaceful and democratic Afghanistan. Canada continues to support them in this aspiration, and will work with the Afghan Government and international community to address the numerous challenges that remain.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his briefing today, and for his excellent work. We commend him on his very successful start at the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also

thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for his briefing today.

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

This meeting takes place at a pivotal moment for Afghanistan and its international friends and supporters. Since our debate in September, Afghanistan has experienced the first democratic change of Government in its long and often painful history. President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah have formed a National Unity Government that aims at building a stable, prosperous, democratic and inclusive country. We strongly believe that these goals serve the interests of all Afghans and therefore they have our full support.

In a few days, NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission will come to an end. Afghanistan will then be fully responsible for the internal and national security of their country. Of course, sceptics remain; they ask whether Afghanistan will be up to that task. While we are concerned about the recent rise in terrorist acts in Kabul, we still believe that, on the whole, Afghanistan's security forces have already answered that question themselves — over the past months, they were in the front lines and in the summer they successfully secured two rounds of presidential elections.

Despite those remarkable achievements, we agree with Special Representative Haysom that the gains made are still fragile. As of January 2015, based on an invitation by the Afghan Government, NATO and its partners will therefore continue to train and assist Afghan security forces under the non-combat Resolute Support Mission. Today, in fact just 10 minutes ago, the German Parliament approved our own substantial contribution to that Mission. We will provide up to 850 troops, to be based in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul, making Germany the second-largest troop contributor to Resolute Support. In this regard, let me commend Security Council members, and particularly Australia as the pen holder, on the recent adoption of resolution 2189 (2014), welcoming the establishment of the Mission. The resolution sends out the clear political message that the international community continues to stand by Afghanistan and feels committed to its stability and security even beyond 2014.

Securing a stable future for Afghanistan requires that international civilian assistance does not come to an abrupt end. At the London Conference on

Afghanistan on 4 December, therefore, Germany renewed its commitment to maintaining its high level of civilian assistance, €430 million per year up to 2016. This pledge builds on a quid pro quo approach as well as on the sound and ambitious reform agenda that President Ghani and Government Chief Executive Officer Abdullah presented in London and in meetings with Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Steinmeier on 5 December in Berlin. We commend the two leaders' clear commitment to tackling corruption, safeguarding human rights, strengthening the role of women, mobilizing the private sector and stabilizing Afghanistan's worrying fiscal situation. The swift merit-based formation of a new cabinet of ministers will play a key role. In this regard, we also continue to strongly support UNAMA and all the United Nations agencies in assisting the Afghan people and in coordinating the international community's assistance. We deem it important that UNAMA remain present, not only in Kabul, but also throughout the country.

While looking at the challenges that certainly lie ahead for Afghanistan, we should not forget what we have achieved since the fall of the Taliban regime. Life expectancy has increased from 45 to 60 years. Maternal and child mortality rates have dropped tremendously. More and more girls are attending schools. Some 200,000 students are enrolled at Afghan universities. Roads have been built, and there is electricity and water in all major cities. That is real progress.

Most importantly, however, Afghanistan has developed a strong civil society that will not allow a rollback of their hard-earned freedoms and rights. Supporting these brave Afghan men and women certainly deserves our continued attention and commitment. Germany will continue to stand by the Afghan Government and people as they write a new chapter in their history.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): Slovakia would first like to align itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/876). I would like to welcome and thank Special Representative Haysom for his briefing and wish him every success in his endeavours, as the task remains huge. Slovakia will continue to offer full support to the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Of course, I cannot proceed without thanking Ambassador Tanin for his effort and his statement. I would also like to thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

UNAMA's performance has been remarkable in recent years. Its role in coming years will be no less important in assisting the Afghan Government in the reform process and in achieving good governance. Commitments made in London in early December encourage us in our efforts, guided as we are by the spirit of inclusion and political unity. In this regard, we invite the Afghan Government to continue its outreach towards all legitimate political stakeholders in Afghanistan.

While President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah are going to embody their vision in the formation a new cabinet, UNAMA and the wider international community stand ready to offer support and experience with transition. We would like to highlight the need for reform, especially in areas of justice, institution-building and legislation. Expansion of principles of rule of law at all horizontal levels of governance will be crucial. The aforementioned principles should be well anchored in the expected revision of electoral law.

The fundamental prerequisites for development in any country of the world are safety, security and stability. Slovakia therefore appreciates the unanimous Security Council decision to adopt resolution 2189 (2014), which, inter alia, welcomes the NATO-Afghan Government Agreement to establish a post-2014 non-combat mission. In that regard, I am honoured to inform the Council that on 10 December the Government of Slovakia approved military troops to serve in the new Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan as of 1 January 2015. Slovakia will also provide financial support for the Afghan National Security Forces. This contribution is fully in line with our long-term commitments and the spirit of cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan. Slovakia also remains active in development assistance to the country, which continues to be among our official development aid priorities. I think that we all can work together and wish the Afghan people all the best in their future endeavours.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by representative of the European Union.

I would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing, as well as Secretary-General for his report containing a comprehensive and realistic analysis of the situation in Afghanistan (S/2014/876). I would also like to thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his briefing, as well as my colleague, Ambassador Tanin, for his statement.

Our common goal is a self-reliant Afghanistan able to shape its own future based on a successful transition. That requires renewed efforts, cooperation and hard work. Regional cooperation in promoting security and development is of key importance in building a peaceful and prosperous future. I would therefore like to recall the importance and responsibilities of neighbours and regional partners in that regard.

The United Nations will remain a key partner in Afghanistan after the transition. The biggest United Nations special political mission, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, plays a critical role in advancing human rights and coordinating international assistance in Afghanistan. To continue to effectively deliver on its mandate in the future, adequate resources need to be ensured.

Since 2001, Afghanistan has made real progress in nation-building, fostering economic growth, improving health and education, and rebuilding infrastructure. However, formidable challenges remain in security, poverty reduction, job creation and service delivery. As we all know, these challenges are interconnected. Post-transition development will depend on reforms in key sectors. The ownership of Afghanistan remains the foundation for Finland's support. We therefore welcome the National Unity Government's "Realizing self-reliance: Commitment to reforms and renewed partnership" paper, which spells out a clear vision of the way forward.

Sustainable progress in Afghanistan is not only about convincing the international community. It is first and foremost about convincing the Afghan people — all people, women and men. It is about restoring their faith in their own Government and about offering them a future. The full and equal participation of women at all levels of society is not only a prerequisite for

democracy and human rights, but it is also the key to economic success and social stability. Afghan women must have a prominent role in the society. We welcome the leadership role fulfilled by President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah in this regard and encourage them to continue in these efforts.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Afghanistan for demonstrating a remarkable sense of ownership in drafting a national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) through countrywide consultations and by Afghans themselves. The national action plan soon to be launched is clearly an Afghan product. For several years, Finland has supported this process in Afghanistan, and we will maintain our support and continue to respect the Afghan-led implementation.

During the past 13 years, Finland has been contributing to the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan through our participation in the International Security Assistance Force and various forms of civilian crisis management. Our development and humanitarian aid amounts to over €220 million. Our annual support now stands at €30 million. We are ready to continue this long-term assistance and retain its current level. We are also preparing to take part with some 80 troops in the Resolute Support Mission, which was welcomed by the Security Council on 12 December. The Finnish Parliament recently approved the Government's white paper on Afghanistan, outlining our future contribution.

As the transition process draws to the end, it is important that the international community maintain its support to Afghanistan and its people. I assure the Council that Finland is ready to do its part.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the position expressed by the observer of the European Union. I should like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

First of all, I should like to thank the Chadian presidency of the Security Council for convening this debate, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan for his briefing, and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

Only three months ago, the uncertainty over the outcome of the elections in Afghanistan, with the

transition process nearing its end, was a source of great concern in the country and throughout the international community. Today, we are pleased to see that this sensitive moment has come to a positive conclusion with the installation of a new President of the Republic and the establishment of a National Unity Government. Allow me to underline the great commitment and efforts of the new Afghan leadership — in particular President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah — in meeting the expectations and hopes of the overwhelming majority of the Afghan population for a future of peace, stability and development. Let me also express deep appreciation for the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United States in recent months to facilitate an agreement between the two former candidates.

The new Afghan Government has already taken encouraging steps at the domestic, regional and international levels. We hope that this positive approach will continue and the interests of national unity will prevail. We are all aware of the serious challenges faced today by Afghanistan and its new authorities, starting with the security situation, which is threatened by a new wave of terrorist attacks that have claimed numerous victims, including unarmed civilians. We condemn these attacks in the firmest possible terms. This is why we welcomed the new Afghan Administration's immediate signature of the Bilateral Security Agreement and the NATO status-of-forces agreement, later ratified by the Afghan Parliament. These instruments represent the legal bases for the upcoming Resolute Support Mission, which will begin after the completion of the transition process.

The launch of the Resolute Support Mission confirms the will of contributing countries, including Italy as a framework nation, to maintain their support of Afghanistan in the consolidation of peace and security. They will work together with the Afghan Government and in coordination with the United Nations to help the Afghan National Security Forces and support them in the performance of their duties.

Italy's support in the security field is one element of our long-term commitment to Afghanistan, which we have reiterated on many occasions, including here and most recently at the London Conference. London was an important event at which the international community and its members reaffirmed their solidarity with Afghanistan and their support for the

new Government on the basis of the principles of the Mutual Accountability Framework established at the Tokyo Conference, namely, mutual commitment, conditionality and the accountability of Afghanistan, inspired by collaboration with the donor countries.

This is why we welcome and support the reform programme presented in London by the Afghan Government in the areas of the fight against corruption, the promotion of human rights — where we believe special attention should be reserved for women — the strengthening of the rule of law, the reform of the election and judiciary systems, and the enhancing of the business climate to attract investors. The programme aims to achieve concrete progress in these areas and enable Afghanistan to build its capacity for development and become self-sustaining.

Italy will remain by Afghanistan's side and to provide assistance, in line with our multi-decade civilian cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Sir, for organizing this meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. I would also like to welcome Mr. Nicholas Haysom as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and wish him success in his new assignment. I also thank him for his briefing.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its deep cultural and historical ties to Afghanistan, is indeed very eager to see a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan as its neighbour. Our policy has been and will continue to be one of supporting peace, stability, security and socioeconomic development in Afghanistan, as we see security in Afghanistan as tantamount to security along our borders and in our region. It is our firm intention to maintain and expand our relationship with Afghanistan, which is rooted in friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutual interest and understanding.

Iran has already welcomed the formation of the National Unity Government, led by His Excellency Mr. Ashraf Ghani as its President and His Excellency Mr. Abdullah as its Chief Executive Officer, and has pledged its support for and cooperation with that Government. We earnestly hope that the new

Government will succeed in its efforts to strengthen peace, security, stability and development in Afghanistan, and can carry its difficult job to fruition.

My Government is deeply concerned over the continuation and exacerbation of violence in Afghanistan, and strongly condemns all violent attacks committed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups against innocent people and Afghan infrastructure. Unfortunately, over the past several years the presence of foreign troops and the activities of terrorists and violent extremist groups have developed into a vicious circle, with terrible consequences for the Afghan people. Those groups have used the presence of foreign troops as an excuse to justify and expand their operations and to attract human and financial resources. We hope that, as the number of foreign troops in Afghanistan dwindles, the situation in that country can and will rapidly return to normal. In the meantime, we condemn any cooperation with and encouragement provided to these groups, as it emboldens them in their odious behaviour, extends the plight of the Afghan people and is counterproductive to establishing peace in Afghanistan and in the region.

On the important question of security arrangements beyond 2014, we believe that any activity aiming at security sector capacity-building or supporting the Afghan National Security Forces, including the Resolute Support Mission, should be undertaken with the full consent of and in constant consultation with the Afghan Government. This is an important prerequisite to demonstrate the strong commitment of the international community to respecting the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. At the same time, we wish to underline that regional cooperation constitutes an effective means to promote security and development in Afghanistan.

Sustainable progress on security and development is mutually reinforcing. The establishment of peace and security remains essential to reconstruction, humanitarian relief efforts and sustainable development. It is in that light that Iran has played an important role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and is ready to pursue that role in future and in cooperation with the new Government. We are ready to expand our bilateral cooperation, particularly on security matters, counter-narcotics efforts, developing projects and economic cooperation in the fields of infrastructure and agriculture, as well as durable solution for Afghan refugees.

There is great potential for improving relations especially in the fields of trade and transit. As an example, completing the railroad project between Herat and Khaf City in Iran would be an important step. We have also offered to make available our facilities in the port of Chah Bahar, which could be very useful for Afghanistan as a landlocked country. We are waiting for the tripartite agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran to be finalized in this regard. We support any regional initiatives aimed at exploring regional potential for the welfare, stability and development of Afghanistan and the rest of the region.

With respect to counter-narcotics efforts, we are particularly concerned about reports indicating that opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has almost doubled since 2012. That poses a real threat to the region and beyond, and should be addressed by the international community and the Afghan Government. In this regard, the international community should, inter alia, support the Triangular Initiative on cooperation on countering narcotics among Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, which is essential not only to strengthening the security and stability of Afghanistan, but also to alleviating the serious concerns of neighboring States and transit and destination countries.

We support UNAMA and the United Nations agencies in their efforts to provide development assistance and reconstruction support to Afghanistan through a robust regional engagement on issues such as border security, immigration, the return of refugees and drug-control measures. The role of UNAMA should be further strengthened in the light of the new developments in Afghanistan. The future role of the United Nations in Afghanistan is going to grow due to the multifaceted and more complicated challenges.

In conclusion, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran once again reiterates its sustained support for the promotion of security, stability and comprehensive and sustainable development in Afghanistan, and extends our warmest support to the new Government in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 1.30 p.m.