



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

58th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 21 November 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lajčák (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 39 (continued)

The situation in Afghanistan

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/72/312 and A/72/392)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.8)

Mr. Nasir (Maldives): The Maldives remains encouraged by the strength, determination and enduring commitment of the people of Afghanistan to lasting peace and stability in the country. We share their vision of a peaceful nation that is free from the clutches of terrorism and extremism. A stable Afghanistan is good for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and for the region. Above all, a peaceful Afghanistan is good for the people of that country and will allow them to make it stronger and more prosperous. The Maldives will always be with the people of Afghanistan, extending whatever support they. They can count on us.

The security situation in Afghanistan is undoubtedly the biggest threat to maintaining stability in the country. The Maldives believes that the Government of Afghanistan needs more support from the United Nations, its Member States and all stakeholders in improving the security situation in the country. We commend the Afghan Government for its perseverance and its steadfastness in combating terrorism and violent extremism. In that vein, we also express our support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process,

with the cooperation of the country's regional partners. Achieving durable peace and stability will be possible only by involving all key stakeholders and allowing Afghans to lead the discussions that shape their future.

Afghanistan has made significant strides in the past few years towards promoting and protecting the human rights and welfare of its people, particularly women and girls. Its election as a member of the Human Rights Council for the first time is testament to the confidence that the international community has placed in the commitment of Afghanistan, and recognition of the progress that the country has achieved on human rights issues. It is our strong belief that international engagement in promoting human rights has a direct positive effect on the progress of key human rights issues nationally. We congratulate Afghanistan on that important achievement and wish it every success in its three-year term as a member of the Human Rights Council.

The Maldives also welcomes the new Afghan National Peace and Development Framework, which sets out the strategic policy for the next five years towards achieving self-reliance. That policy is framed with the Afghan people in mind, in order to free them from poverty and to improve their welfare. We are particularly pleased with the special focus it places on empowering women, guaranteeing their active participation in maintaining security and stability and in the broader social and economic development of the country.

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We believe that greater economic integration and the collaboration of regional partners, including SAARC, are paramount to the development of Afghanistan and to ensure the safety and security of its people. For that to happen, the unwavering commitment of all regional partners is essential. In that regard, the Maldives recognizes the important steps taken so far by Afghanistan towards enhancing regional cooperation.

Afghanistan is a beautiful country with a rich culture and history. We should not allow that country to be defined by war and instability. A safe, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the best interest of all its neighbours and the entire world. We must strengthen our efforts to support Afghanistan towards that end.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I thank Afghanistan and Chief Executive Abdullah for addressing the General Assembly yesterday (see A/72/PV.56), as well as Germany for leading efforts on the important draft resolution before us (A/72/L.8).

As we have been discussing, Afghanistan continues to face huge challenges to its peace and stability. The insurgency in Afghanistan is hugely destabilizing and has brought nothing but suffering for decades. Threats remain to security, governance and development. The people of Afghanistan deserve better.

Significant progress has been made by the Government of Afghanistan as it seeks to overcome the legacy of more than 40 years of conflict. Afghanistan now has a democratic Government, and with international assistance it has introduced huge social improvements, including sending 6.4 million children to school. The United Kingdom will keep working closely with the Government of Afghanistan to achieve a stable and secure future. We will continue to offer development funds to secure the future of the Afghan people, with confirmed funding of up to \$1 billion until 2020. We are also promoting sustainable security by increasing the number of British military advisers in Afghanistan.

However, despite that progress, a significant amount of work remains to be done. There is no purely military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. A credible peace process is the only way to end the violence that impacts the lives of Afghan people on a daily basis. Today's draft resolution is an important reaffirmation of both the United Kingdom's and the international community's ongoing commitment to stability in Afghanistan.

We would like to extend our thanks to the President for his tireless work to achieve a consensus on this draft resolution, which underpins international support on these important issues. We also commend all those delegations that worked hard and displayed flexibility to ensure that today's draft resolution reflects the international consensus and the needs of Afghanistan. We are proud to co-sponsor this important document, which highlights the need for all members of the Assembly to fully support Afghanistan's efforts towards an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

That is the only realistic solution to the conflict. As President Ghani has said, the Taliban have a choice between peace and war. They must choose to help to rebuild Afghanistan. We call on the members of the Assembly and the international community to support the Government of Afghanistan in that effort, including at the next meeting in January of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation. It is in all of our interests to work together, under the leadership of the Government of Afghanistan, to underpin its success.

Today's draft resolution recognizes the need for us all to continue to support Afghanistan so that it can achieve self-reliance. The United Kingdom remains fully committed to working with Afghanistan and the international community in order to collectively achieve that goal and to secure a prosperous, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan.

Mr. Halvorsen (Norway): The international engagement in Afghanistan is a long-term effort to support security and economic development. Our common goal is to stabilize the country and prevent it from being a haven for terrorism. Afghanistan has made progress, but that progress remains uncertain.

The National Unity Government is the best hope for securing the long-term stability of Afghanistan. Governance, service delivery and the fight against corruption are major challenges. Poppy cultivation and the smuggling of opium from Taliban-controlled and other areas are additional challenges. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has made an important contribution to the fight against narcotics.

The security situation in Afghanistan is precarious, and international military and civilian assistance remain essential. The Taliban has gained control over large parts of Afghanistan's territory and is attempting to make more inroads. The Afghan security forces are under heavy pressure and not able to assume complete

control over the whole of Afghanistan. There is a broad agreement that continued international military and civilian support for Afghanistan is necessary but not sufficient to achieve our common goal. Stability also requires a political process with the Taliban. The National Unity Government and the international community share that assessment. One challenge is to find the right format and timing for engaging in such a process.

Norway has contributed and will continue to contribute to efforts aimed at bringing the different parties together with a view to a political solution. Norway welcomes the new strategy of the United States in Afghanistan, which signals a continued United States presence in Afghanistan on the diplomatic and military fronts. We welcome the regional approach and the opening towards a political settlement to the conflict.

Norway is prepared to play its part. Afghanistan will remain one of the largest recipients of Norwegian aid. Our annual aid to Afghanistan is around 700 million Norwegian kroner, which is around \$80 million. Through the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, Norwegian special forces train and support the Afghan special police crisis response unit in Kabul.

Elections are important for the legitimacy of Afghanistan's democracy. Plans for parliamentary, provincial and district elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019 are welcome. Much work remains to be done to register voters and make practical preparations. The Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan must be in a position to prepare for and oversee legitimate elections. The United Nations has a crucial role to play. There is no time to lose. Norway encourages the Afghan Government to continue its efforts to hold timely, free and fair elections with international support.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.8, as orally revised, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/72/L.8, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Norway, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Slovakia, the Sudan, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.8, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/72/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 72/10).

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

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.