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**General Assembly
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The situation in Afghanistan****Security Council
Seventy-sixth year****Letter dated 23 July 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to forward to you a joint statement issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan following their meeting on the developments in Afghanistan held in Tashkent on 16 July 2021 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 39, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dmitry Polyanskiy
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 23 July 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: Russian]

**Joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian
Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the
Republic of Uzbekistan following their fourth meeting on the
situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

The participants in the fourth meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, held on 16 July 2021 in Tashkent, note that the current situation in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country and the subsequent escalation of hostilities between the government forces and the Taliban, in particular in several northern provinces on the border with Central Asia, is cause for serious concern. Moreover, the Ministers believe that it is vital under the new geopolitical circumstances to continue to seek opportunities to stabilize the military and political situation and establish peace in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The participants in the meeting thus call upon all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan to refrain from the use of force and destabilizing actions in order to create a favourable environment for advancing the peace process.

We are convinced that comprehensive and sustainable peace in Afghanistan can be achieved only through direct, inclusive negotiations on a political settlement among Afghans themselves, led by the Afghan people and with enhanced support from States and international institutions for post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

We look forward to the Government in Kabul and the Taliban engaging in constructive negotiations with the aim of developing harmonized approaches to bring an end to the many years of war and establish Afghanistan as a peaceful, independent and sovereign State.

In this regard, we welcome efforts towards national reconciliation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through all platforms for dialogue, including the Istanbul Process, taking into account the outcomes of the ninth Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process ministerial conference, held on 30 March 2021 in Dushanbe; the extended “Troika” (Russia, the United States of America, China and Pakistan); and the Moscow format consultations on Afghanistan.

We emphasize the practical relevance and effectiveness of the outcomes of the seventh Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, held on 14 and 15 November 2017 in Ashgabat, aimed at actively integrating Afghanistan into the system of international economic relations.

We recognize the importance of ongoing initiatives and steps to facilitate the socioeconomic reconstruction of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its integration into regional economic processes in accordance with the common approaches developed at the “Peace process, security cooperation and regional connectivity” conference on Afghanistan, held on 27 March 2018 in Tashkent.

We firmly condemn the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, the victims of which are civilians. The continued presence and activities of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and other international terrorist groups are among the key drivers of

instability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, including in several of its northern provinces.

We are concerned by the expansion of drug cultivation and the high levels of drug production and illicit arms trafficking in Afghanistan, which are among the main sources of income for terrorist groups, and we expect the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to accelerate their efforts to address these threats.

We note the efforts of the United Nations to assist the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and express our support for the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

We welcome the first meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Afghanistan within the framework of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, held on 14 July 2021 in Dushanbe, and will continue to progressively implement the road map for further steps by the Contact Group, signed at the end of the SCO summit held on 14 June 2019 in Bishkek.
