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### **BUILD ON POSITIVE TRENDS TO REVERSE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, SAYS**

### **SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE WHILE BRIEFING SECURITY COUNCIL**

#### **He Calls 'Doom-and-Gloom' Statements by People Unfamiliar with Country Unhelpful**

It was crucial to build upon positive political trends in Afghanistan in order to overcome the deteriorating security situation, Kai Eide, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in that country, told the Security Council this morning.

“Doom and gloom statements, many of which come from people who have not set foot in Afghanistan, are not helpful,” Mr. Eide stressed in a briefing that preceded an open debate on the issue. While it was true that July and August had seen the highest number of security incidents since 2002, the insurgency had now extended to provinces around Kabul, the capital, and attacks had become more deadly and increasingly targeted humanitarian personnel.

However, Afghanistan’s relationship with Pakistan had improved, and recent political changes, including changes in the Ministries of Interior and Agriculture, could be very significant, he said. Furthermore, the process for the next elections had started a week ago, and 90 per cent of voter-registration centres were already open. Progress had also been made in restricting the areas in which illicit poppies were grown.

“If good use is made of those positive trends, the current negative atmosphere could be replaced by one of greater confidence,” he said, urging donors to meet the commitments they had made at the June Paris Conference, particularly those relating to efforts to offset the impact of the global food crisis.

Mr. Eide, who also heads the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), appealed for an increase in staff and budget for the Mission, stressing that he was more concerned about the quality of staff than the quantity. UNAMA needs specialists in the areas of aid effectiveness and agriculture. Better coordination with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was now in place, election-assistance efforts were on track, and a better consultation strategy had been established to strengthen institution-building, make the civil service more effective, support incoming ministers, and provide more targeted and effective assistance in other areas. However, there was a need for a mechanism to measure aid effectiveness, according to a variety of criteria that related directly to the Paris commitments.

Following the briefing, Afghanistan’s representative agreed that, despite hard work on the part of international coalition forces and Afghans alike, terrorism appeared to be on the rise again. The Taliban burned down schools, stamped out reconstruction and butchered civilians. They hampered international humanitarian relief and increasingly targeted ordinary people. The Taliban were fighting a war of perception, launching spectacular attacks that the media could easily seize upon. The manner in which the conflict was portrayed in the media and international forums was important lest the terrorists win.

“The way forward in Afghanistan is to recognize that abandonment and failure are not options,” he said. “We must stop engaging in the wrong debate of whether or not we will fail; we must instead focus on the right debate -- how we can succeed.” Successes should not be underestimated. Afghanistan’s gross domestic product had tripled since 2001 and there was no conflict in two thirds of the country. The international community must not under-report the many success stories, while destruction and brutality by the Taliban should be reported more widely.

An increase in international troops was an essential first step to counter terrorist activities, he continued. However, those troops must also be willing to face enemies and conduct operations thoroughly. They should address the issue of civilian casualties in a responsible manner. Moreover, that security was not confined to military security. Real security would be established by an improvement in the daily lives of Afghans.

Pakistan’s representative said there was no quick fix to the challenges of Afghanistan, which required sustained international engagement. A truly comprehensive strategy, owned by the Afghan people, was required in addressing the intricate challenges of reconciliation, security, drugs, governance and development.

Regarding security, he said the Secretary-General’s report provided a myopic view of the cross-border issue. As a result of Pakistan’s role in the counter-terrorism campaign, its security environment had deteriorated sharply. The new democratic Government was in the process of reaching a national consensus on confronting and defeating the terrorists by following a new, holistic strategy against extremism and terrorism, which employed political dialogue and socio-economic measures, but retained the option to use force whenever required.

Pakistan remained committed to working with Afghanistan and international forces to defeat terrorism, but expected reciprocal cooperation based on goodwill and respect for both countries’ sovereignty and territorial integrity, he said. No foreign troops would be allowed to operate inside Pakistan, but on the other hand, Pakistan welcomed ongoing initiatives to strengthen avenues of dialogue and cooperation between the two countries.

Most other speakers agreed with Mr. Eide on the need to build upon political progress within Afghanistan, and between that country and Pakistan, following the strategies agreed at the Paris Conference. Most speakers also urged continued vigilance in avoiding civilian casualties as much as possible, while attributing most carnage among civilians to insurgent attacks. Most also supported broad national reconciliation, while some specifically ruled out including jihadists in that dialogue. France’s representative, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, stressed the need to fight terrorists “to the end”.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Italy, Libya, United States, Belgium, Indonesia, Viet Nam, United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Croatia, Russian Federation, Panama, Costa Rica, China, India, Japan, Iran, Netherlands, Germany and Norway.

The meeting began at 10:15 a.m. and ended at 1:40 p.m.

#### Background

Before the Council was the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (document A/63/372-S/2008/617), which provides an update on developments since his previous report (document A/62/722-S/2008/159, see Press Release [SC/9274](#) of 12 March).

The report draws attention to the increase in attacks by anti-Government elements, which has led to a more challenging situation, with more civilian casualties, not only as a result of the attacks, but also as an “unintended consequence of operations by pro-Government forces”. However, preparations for the voter-registration process have progressed, as have counter-narcotics efforts, with an increase of the number of poppy-free provinces from 13 to 18.

Recalling that the Paris Conference in Support of Afghanistan, held on 12 June, launched the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the report says participants pledged \$2.14 billion for the country's development. The Development Strategy provides a road map for future efforts by the Government and the international community to provide for the security and prosperity of the Afghan people. If the funds pledged are to have the impact required, massive institution-building efforts will be necessary, alongside decisive action to address serious weaknesses in governance.

The report states that the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board -- established in 2006 to ensure greater coherence of efforts by the Afghan Government and the international community to implement the 2006 London Conference "Afghan Compact" -- met on 6 July and 9 September. Upon the proposal of the Special Representative, it decided to streamline its decision-making process by replacing the numerous consultative groups with three standing committees dealing with security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and economic and social development. Following the Paris Conference, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) undertook to enhance its coordination of donor efforts and to strengthen aid effectiveness. The Mission is currently preparing to open new provincial offices, further strengthening the good offices and outreach capability offered by its existing 17 field offices.

According to the Secretary-General, although the report presents a mixed picture, the negative trend can be reversed if the commitments undertaken at the Paris Conference are implemented. "Ultimately, success will depend on our ability to bring about a 'political surge' that musters the political determination to address those areas in which international and Afghan efforts have been insufficient, and to accelerate progress where gains have been made," he writes. "Afghan people throughout the country must be able to see and experience more concrete results of and benefits from the assistance that they hear has been pledged to their country. They must see that corruption is being punished and competence rewarded. Civilians must be protected, not only from terrorism and insurgency, but also from unintended consequences of pro-Government military operations. They must be given a stronger sense of confidence in the international community, both civilian and military, and especially in their own Government," he concludes.

#### Briefing by Special Representative

KAI EIDE, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said that, since his last briefing to the Council, the positive news from the Paris Conference held in June 2008 had been replaced by reports of a deteriorating security situation. July and August had seen the highest number of security incidents since 2002. The insurgency now extended to provinces around Kabul, attacks had become more deadly, and there were more attacks against humanitarian targets. Since Ramadan, a decrease in attacks had allowed a polio vaccination campaign to take place, but, at the moment, attacks were increasing once again and the usual winter lull might not even take place. The situation was challenging and complex.

He cautioned, however, against the doom-and-gloom statements heard recently, saying there were positive developments that must be built upon. Afghanistan's ties with Pakistan had improved, with a more constructive relationship emerging. Dialogue between the two countries was expanding, on the basis of the shared threat from insurgents, and the international community must encourage the relationship. The Loya Jirga process would also help. In addition, political changes in Afghanistan, including the strengthening of the Ministry of Interior and the police sector, could be very significant. The changes in the Ministry of Agriculture could also help avoid shortages of food and stimulate economic growth in an area that had been neglected for too long. Finally, the illicit drug statistics showed some improvement and further progress could be made. Poppy production had become limited to the south and was no longer nationwide. That progress must be consolidated.

If good use was made of those positive trends, the current negative atmosphere could be replaced by one of greater confidence, which was important both for the Afghan population and donors, he said. However, there was an increase in serious humanitarian challenges, and there was a

need for donors to meet their commitments to offset the impact of the food crisis. The election process had started a week ago and 90 per cent of voter-registration centres were open. UNAMA was monitoring the situation closely, and working with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

In general, cooperation between UNAMA and ISAF had improved greatly, he said. As part of the civilian-military cooperation, a comprehensive approach was needed to determine how to allocate all resources in order to produce optimum effects on the ground. Military resources were currently allocated mostly to provinces that were seeing the most fighting. However, a balanced, province-based perspective was needed to ensure that those provinces also received some development aid. Some provinces wracked by conflict could be stabilized with the proper amount of development resources. Without such an equitable distribution of resources, the Afghan National Development Strategy would be untenable.

With regard to reconciliation, he said that, while it was mainly a political problem, it must be supported by the international community. UNAMA stood ready to assist though it was still a small Mission in need of qualified staff to fulfil its mandate. It needed support for an increase in staff and budget. The quality of the Mission staff was a greater concern than the quantity. Specialists were needed in such areas as aid effectiveness and agriculture. A better consultation strategy had been set up since the Paris Conference to strengthen institution-building and make the civil service more effective, support incoming ministers and provide more targeted and effective assistance in other areas.

In the near future, it would be necessary to create a mechanism to measure aid effectiveness according to a variety of criteria relating directly to the Paris commitments, he said. In addition, a single data bank must be set up to track resources. Currently, the Government did not know the total amount being received and spent. Among other measures, it was necessary to specify the kind of police services that should be built, and the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan must be broadened and deepened. All of those areas required that commitments already made be taken seriously.

#### Statements

ZAHIR TANIN (Afghanistan) said that, despite hard work on the part of international coalition forces and Afghans alike, terrorism appeared to be on the rise again. The Taliban burned down schools, stamped out reconstruction and butchered civilians. They hampered international humanitarian relief and increasingly targeted ordinary people. To push back against that trend required an understanding of the changes that had occurred in the sources and strategy of the Taliban threat since 2001.

Pointing out that the Taliban were a heterogeneous group in which some members might be willing to participate in the peace process, he said they and Al-Qaida had intensified operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) border regions of Pakistan and hoped to use the elections in the United States and Afghanistan to force a change in the international commitment in Afghanistan. The Taliban were fighting a war of perception, launching spectacular attacks which the media could easily seize upon.

Stressing that security was not confined to military security, he said real security was established by improving the daily lives of Afghans. It was measured by improvement in humanitarian efforts, in governance and the rule of law, in counter-narcotics, in the upcoming elections, in a strong army and police, and in a strong and sustainable economy. The humanitarian situation with regard to the food shortage needed immediate attention from the international community. Three days ago, the Government had taken a crucial step towards eliminating corruption by reshuffling the Cabinet and appointing a new Interior Minister. It had also created the High Office of Oversight for Anti-Corruption.

With more than half its provinces poppy-free, the country's counter-narcotics efforts were seeing the beginning of a breakthrough, he said, noting that the remaining centres of poppy cultivation were in the insecure areas. Secure, transparent, timely and credible presidential elections in 2009 were tremendously important. The elections required a process of sustained long-term efforts. The Government hoped that the political process could act as a unifying rather than a

divisive force for Afghanistan. The Afghan National Army had accomplished significant improvements in control-and-command, and plans were in place to increase its numbers from 75,000 to 134,000 troops by 2010. The Government was also strongly dedicated to improving the economy and was building roads, schools and clinics in more than two thirds of Afghanistan's villages through the National Solidarity Programme.

He said: "The way forward in Afghanistan is to recognize that abandonment and failure are not options. We must stop engaging in the wrong debate of whether or not we will fail; we must instead focus on the right debate -- how we can succeed." That way required a regional solution, sustained international commitment and appropriate strategies in the war of perceptions; and a consideration of all components important to a successful political solution to the country's challenges.

Describing the Taliban as a regional threat, he said the new President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, was a friend and trusted leader with whom terrorism could be addressed jointly. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister would visit Pakistan on 22 October. The international community must continue that momentum by boosting joint efforts to eradicate the threat posed by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. The sustained international commitment had been demonstrated at the Bucharest Summit and the Paris Conference, with pledges of more than \$20 billion. It was to be hoped that international attention would remain focused.

In order to counter the war of perception, one should be careful with what was said about Afghanistan, he said. The Taliban had used some recent statements and reports as a powerful weapon to convince the Afghan people that the international community's resolve was wavering. Their successes should not be underestimated. Gross domestic product had tripled since 2001 and there was no conflict in two thirds of the country. The international community must not under-report the many success stories, and the Taliban's destruction and brutality should be reported in stronger terms.

He said that, as a "political surge", reconciliation efforts must be better framed both inside and outside Afghanistan. Important steps had been taken in recent months to begin the reconciliation process, and outreach efforts by the Government would be extended both to communities under Taliban influence and those in secure regions. However, a political surge should not neglect the importance of military action. An increase in the number of international troops was an essential first step to countering terrorist activities. However, those troops must also be willing to face enemies and conduct operations thoroughly. They should responsibly address the issue of civilian casualties.

GIULIO TERZI DI SANT'AGATA (Italy) reaffirmed his country's full support for the United Nations in coordinating civilian activities in Afghanistan, saying it was a matter of urgency that UNAMA receive adequate resources, particularly in a context that required political and humanitarian responses. The high level of civilian casualties overshadowed progress, and that factor as well as disturbing trends must be reversed urgently. For that reason, the strategy developed at the Paris Conference must be implemented with greater determination. Civilian and military cooperation must be increased for that purpose.

He said his country was still playing its part despite budgetary constraints. Italy had enhanced the flexibility of its contingents, in addition to providing extra resources for the upcoming elections and other programmes. It was also supporting justice sector reform, where more action was needed, alongside UNAMA staff qualified in that area. While welcoming the improved relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Italy hoped to work on that during its presidency of the Group of Eight (G-8). Cohesion in all international efforts must be strengthened as well.

GIADALLA A. ETTALHI (Libya) said the situation in Afghanistan was deteriorating seriously, with 39 per cent more civilian victims in 2008 than in 2007, more than half of which had been caused by the actions of international forces. Libya condemned actions by insurgent forces that also caused civilian casualties.

During the Paris Conference, the National Development Strategy for Afghanistan had been adopted with commitments of over \$21 billion, he said. There was a need to assess the progress made

in implementing the Strategy and fulfilling commitments as development was a very important factor in peace and security. There had been much progress in areas such as demining and counter-narcotics, among other things, and in the improved regional relations. Nevertheless, gaps remained and a solution required reconciliation between the various sectors of the population and parallel efforts in development.

Emphasizing the need to fight corruption and extremism, he said the Government must restore the confidence of its people. As there had been no improvement in reported violations of prisoners' rights, torture and arbitrary detention, Libya reiterated the importance of respecting the human rights of everyone. Libya was extremely concerned about the food crisis because of the surge in food prices and the drought. The international community and UNAMA had a critical role to play in providing assistance, and the Mission should have the necessary means to carry out its work.

ZALMAY KHALILZAD (United States) said that, in order for UNAMA to implement its revised mandate and face the new challenges, his country supported an immediate surge in the Mission's capabilities based on the proposals made by the Special Representative. The United States was gravely concerned about humanitarian conditions as many lives were in jeopardy, both from food shortages and cold weather. Planning for winter should aim to help Afghans deal with both, and the United States, as the largest donor, was prepared to do more.

He said the security situation had become more challenging as the Taliban and their allies continued to wage deadly attacks on military and civilian targets. Success in the fight against them could be achieved, despite recent doom-and-gloom talk. Success required that the Government implement its National Development Strategy and improve local governance, combat corruption, reform its police forces and increase its counter-narcotics efforts, among other things. The United States welcomed the fact that Afghan security forces were taking on increasing responsibility for protecting the people. The 2009 elections were very important and it was therefore imperative that the international community redouble efforts to ensure they were credible. The United States called on the Afghan Government to hold the elections as scheduled.

Underscoring the importance of the role of neighbouring countries, he said the new Government in Pakistan offered an opportunity to battle regional terrorism. That should mean, among other things, an end to sanctuaries for hostile forces, the use of terrorism for national interests, and increased intelligence sharing and reconciliation, all of which were necessities for stability and development. Both Afghans and Pakistanis needed international support to resist terrorist efforts, and the United States urged the Secretariat to ensure that the Special Representative had the support and means needed to carry out his mission.

Expressing his deep regret for the accidental loss of civilian lives, he said he shared the Secretary-General's grave concern about civilian casualties. The United States would do everything in its power to ensure that ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom prevented civilian casualties and acknowledged them when they occurred. However, the fundamental cause of the casualties was the fight waged by the Taliban, who used civilians as shields and were increasingly resorting to asymmetric attacks against population centres. There was a need for better coordination, and the United States chain of command had been streamlined. More forces would be sent to Afghanistan.

JAN GRAULS (Belgium) said he shared the concerns raised about the number of civilian victims in Afghanistan. While most such casualties were caused by insurgents, it was important that those caused by international forces be prevented as much as possible. Belgium welcomed efforts to that end. Drug production must be further reduced, and security strengthened through a comprehensive approach involving increased development activity, as planned at the Paris Conference.

Besides its participation in ISAF, Belgium was supporting crucial development initiatives, he said. Decisive action must be taken to mitigate Government weaknesses and align international aid with the most effective measures that could be taken. Finally, the positive trends noted by the Special Representative were strong signals of hope, for both the people of Afghanistan and the international community.

MARTY M. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia), stressing that the situation in Afghanistan must be addressed by a strategy incorporating security actions, the promotion of good governance and socio-economic development, said his country attached primary importance to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Indonesia also attached great importance to implementation of the Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, and welcomed the recent decrease in opium cultivation and production.

He said that, while the Afghan-led reconciliation process must be inclusive, his country recognized recent initiatives undertaken by neighbouring countries to assist the inter-Afghan dialogue. On the protection of civilians, all parties should comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, and Indonesia called on the international forces in Afghanistan to take additional “robust efforts” to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, he said his country attached particular importance to expeditious resource mobilization, and urged an immediate and permanent end to attacks on humanitarian workers. Indonesia hoped the International Conference on Return and Reintegration of Afghan Refugees would mobilize support for refugees and internally displaced persons. On partnerships, there was a need for the urgent realization of pledges made at the Paris Conference. Indonesia was concerned about obstacles stemming from the deteriorating security situation, which hindered implementation of UNAMA’s mandate.

LE LUONG MINH (Viet Nam) said he was deeply worried about the spread of violent insurgent activities across Afghanistan, especially in provinces adjacent to Kabul, as they hampered reconstruction efforts. Because of that situation, 190,000 children had been denied access to a recent immunization programme. Food shortages, which affected one sixth of the population, were compounded by the severity of the violence. Another concern was the trend of increasing attacks against aid workers and convoys. Viet Nam urged an end to those unjustifiable attacks, and called for all necessary measures to ensure safety for all people carrying out “noble humanitarian work”.

Calling for the further strengthening of security as a priority, he stressed the need to do more to address the root cause of the conflict. Measures should be taken to create jobs for rural people in order to reduce their dependence on opium cultivation, and to improve social services — including health care and education — so that Afghans realized they would be better off as beneficiaries of the peacebuilding process than of violence. To that end, Viet Nam welcomed efforts to implement the National Development Strategy and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, Afghanistan deserved continued international support, which should speed the implementation of the Paris commitments, he said, calling on the United Nations, through UNAMA, to play a key coordinating role. It was essential that international assistance target the most vulnerable people. In closing, Viet Nam reaffirmed its consistent support for the Government and people of Afghanistan in the post-conflict reconstruction process.

JEAN-MAURICE RIPERT (France) said that, since UNAMA had been given the primary role in coordinating humanitarian aid, all international actors should support that role and give the Mission the necessary means to carry out its task. Developments over the last few months showed mixed results, with positive trends including success in counter-narcotics efforts. However, there were also disturbing elements, such as the security, human rights and humanitarian situations. Although France was concerned about the number of civilian victims, their deaths were caused mainly by anti-Government activities.

He said the difficulties and challenges faced should not mask the progress made, including the 25 per cent drop in infant mortality, increased school enrolment and the establishment of democratic institutions. The international community must help in preparations for the upcoming elections to be held in 2009 and 2010. The international community and Afghanistan had a strategy defined by the Afghanistan Compact and the Paris Road Map, which were based on the needs of the Afghan population. Decisive measures must be taken quickly to implement those commitments.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, he said Afghanistan and the United Nations could count on the bloc's full support. It was the second major contributor to reconstruction and also contributed to strengthening the national police, among other things. On the military front, 25 European Union member countries were part of ISAF, accounting for half the total number of troops. A lasting solution to the conflict should include military as well as political efforts. As broad a national political dialogue as possible should be held in order to promote reconciliation. However, those efforts could not include the jihadists, who must be fought to the end.

JOHN SAWERS ( United Kingdom) welcomed Mr. Eide's proposals and agreed UNAMA's work was essential to secure the future in Afghanistan. He reaffirmed that the insurgency could not be defeated by military means alone. Equally important was good governance and viable economic growth. The challenge was assisting the Afghans to deliver that vision for themselves.

More progress was needed in the effort to build a professional police force, and he hoped that changes in the Ministry of Interior would help bring that about. In the area of narcotics, he said that complacency must be avoided and he described some of his country's efforts to assist the fight against the production of poppies. In regard to civilian casualties, he noted that most were caused by insurgents, but said that procedures must constantly be reviewed to make sure that casualties caused by international action were minimized. He supported Mr. Eide's call for a renewed international effort to assist Afghanistan to reach stability.

MICHEL KAFANDO ( Burkina Faso) said Afghanistan remained one of the most difficult and complex issues on the Council's agenda. The challenges facing UNAMA had been exacerbated by the rising insurgency, and the situation must be addressed with urgency, including dialogue and negotiation. He urged the international community to remain vigilant, and to ease the suffering of the Afghan people. He welcomed continued work on the problems of refugees. Energetic and courageous efforts must be taken, as well, to end impunity for human rights violators.

He also welcomed progress in the electoral laws, and said that everything must be done to enhance security in advance of the upcoming elections. In addition, he welcomed positive changes that had been made in the political arena, and the numerous signs of the revival of a relationship between Afghanistan and the other countries of the region. In conclusion, he said that UNAMA must be able to count on the support of the Security Council in fulfilling its recently renewed mandate.

DUMISANI KUMALO ( South Africa) said the international community had a shared interest in a stable, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan. The challenges facing the country should not be underestimated. Key among them were deterioration in the security situation, human rights deficiencies, a worsening humanitarian situation and increased civilian casualties. He deplored any attempts to destabilize the country, in particular terrorist attacks against civilians and children. The security situation had also hampered the implementation of UNAMA's mandate. Concerned about the increasing number of civilian casualties, he called upon the international forces to minimize the risk to civilians.

He said the country was making progress in, among other things, counter-narcotics efforts. Opium cultivation and production had decreased. He encouraged the Government to improve its institutional capacity to offer viable alternatives to poppy cultivation. Underscoring the importance of regional cooperation, he commended the improved relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and welcomed the expressed resolve by both countries to combat extremism and terrorism by improving exchange of information. As improved coordination in humanitarian areas was of vital importance, he supported strengthening UNAMA's capacity for such coordination.

NEVEN JURICA ( Croatia) said he was worried about the worsening security situation as the insurgency was intensifying. Of particular concern was the situation in the border regions with Pakistan. Because the Taliban's tactics had contributed to the rise of civilian casualties, he urged for strict compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law throughout Afghanistan. He was also concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation, which had been exacerbated by the global

increase in food prices. To address that situation, Croatia had donated \$50,000 to the World Food Programme.

Since the insurgency in Afghanistan was fuelled by the drug trade, he was encouraged, he said, by reports that there had been a decrease in opium production and cultivation. Inextricably linked to opium was corruption. Recent measures by the Government underlined its serious intention to combat that scourge. On security matters, he welcomed the continued improvement of the Army and its assumption of authority for security in Kabul. He also welcomed recent regional agreements between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

As there was not a military solution to the problem, he said, the Government must apply a comprehensive approach which included humanitarian and development activities. Disaffected Afghans should be brought into the mainstream. Greater human and security resources should go to UNAMA with a sense of urgency. Croatia had raised its military contribution by 30 per cent and had initiated several development projects.

VITALY CHURKIN ([Russian Federation](#)) said he shared the concerns raised about the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing that extremist leaders must be isolated. The drug threat was of particular concern and there was a need to make use of regional mechanisms. Without combating the drug threat, ISAF's activity would not be fully effective. The Russian Federation had offered its cooperation in countering the drug threat and its bolstering of terrorists, but so far that offer had not been taken up.

Preventing loss of life among the civilian population was of utmost concern, particularly when it occurred as the result of international action, he said. The results of the Paris Conference should become a road map for stabilizing Afghanistan and assisting its development. Of particular importance were the creation of truly effective national armed forces, and the boosting of development initiatives. The Russian Federation had been active in the latter, having reduced the debt owed to it by Afghanistan and provided scholarships and assistance for other initiatives.

ANDRES DE VENGOECHEA ([Panama](#)) said the phrase "Afghanistan is at a crossroads" was now more true than ever. There were two options: continuing with the same strategy where everybody would lose; or step up efforts to rebuild the country together with national reconciliation. A military victory was not achievable and removing all insurgent troops was impossible. The insurgency rose out of a culture rooted in the society.

The Government of Afghanistan should redouble its efforts to integrate moderate elements of the insurgency, including members of the Taliban who renounced violence, he said. There was also a need to increase the political commitment of the international community to Afghanistan. Afghans should feel that their lives were improving because of international efforts. The rule of law must be established throughout the country to root out corruption and increase the living standards of every citizen. There must be an end to violence and desperation.

JORGE URBINA ([Costa Rica](#)) said the serious deterioration in security was the result of a combination of different factors, especially governance, which lay at its heart. Despite positive developments, the key challenge for the Government was creating capacity at the local level, where the lack of resources and corruption continued to have a crippling effect. A climate of impunity perpetuated the idea that crime and abuse of power were acceptable. Costa Rica was also concerned about the increase in the number of civilian victims, some of whom, unfortunately, had been killed because of failed actions by international forces.

The Government and the international community must face the threat posed by the food crisis in an urgent manner, he said. Assistance in reducing that threat would not only play a humanitarian role, but also a strategic one. Among positive developments in the country were successes in counter-narcotics efforts and the tripling of the gross domestic product since 2001.

He asked why the Special Representative thought that recent political changes in the Interior and Agriculture Ministries constituted positive developments. What obstacles hindered

better coordination by UNAMA of humanitarian efforts, and why had the tripling in gross domestic product not contributed to a reduction in poverty?

Council President LIU ZHENMIN ([China](#)), speaking in his national capacity, said he supported the role of UNAMA and the strategies developed at the Paris Conference. The international community must make a greater effort to help Afghanistan's own efforts to solve its security problems, including helping it strengthen its security sector, encourage reconciliation and minimize civilian casualties. UNAMA and ISAF should also prioritize assistance in the upcoming elections. The international community should also honour its commitments in the humanitarian sphere. China pledged to continue its support in all those areas.

NIRUPAM SEN ([India](#)) expressed grave concern over the escalation of attacks in areas cleared of the Taliban and Al-Qaida, as well as the attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers, United Nations convoys and diplomatic representatives. He held the Taliban, Al-Qaida and their supporters fully responsible for the increased violence and death toll. However, he said he felt discomfort in identifying forces as either "anti-Government" or "pro-Government", since that accorded parity between the terrorists and the forces of order.

Working collectively on a three-pronged strategy was the only option for success in Afghanistan, he said. Establishing security so that peace could develop should be the first step. The crisis in Afghanistan called for robust measures, such as impacting the Taliban's ability to fight, to maintain safe-havens, and to have access to finances and armaments. This required an expanded coordination of politico-military effort beyond Afghanistan's borders, so that destabilizing the Taliban could be thoroughly implemented. He said a clear road map was established with the adoption of the Afghan National Development Strategy at the Paris Conference in June. The Council must keep in mind that resources were needed to ensure that efforts to implement the Strategy were successful. To stabilize Afghanistan there was also the urgent need to develop regional cooperation. This included, but was not limited to, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

He said the Council should "avoid excessive expectations" and not impose socio-economic models that were not appropriate for the unique recent and distant history of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's problems could not be solved all at once; however, with patience, perseverance and an Afghan-led process, there would be progress towards stabilization.

YUKIO TAKASU ([Japan](#)) said that, while he shared the Secretary-General's assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, he also acknowledged the significant State-building efforts of the past seven years. With "resolute efforts" by the Government and people of Afghanistan, and the support of the global community, the situation could be reversed. The security situation was of paramount concern, as the number of civilian casualties had grown with the increased reliance by insurgents on asymmetric attacks. Japan was deeply concerned that humanitarian workers had become targets, and condemned all attacks against innocents who were genuinely assisting the country.

There was an urgent need to strengthen the Afghan security forces, and Japan fully supported the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board's decision to expand the national army, he said. Reform of the police and the Interior Ministry should be accelerated, and Japan supported the provision of assistance for the police payroll through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan. It also expected follow-through in anti-corruption commitments. Japan welcomed the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 1833 (2008), and was determined to support Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean.

On the disbandment of illegal armed groups, he stressed the need for accelerated progress, saying his country would do its utmost to support the Government through policy coordination. Counter-narcotics action was also a priority issue, and Japan called for exploring measures to cut the link between insurgents and the production and trafficking of drugs. On reconstruction and development, Japan welcomed the streamlining of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board's decision-making process, but called for follow-through on international commitments and pledges.

He said the success of the elections to be held in 2009 and 2010 was essential to the consolidation of nation-building efforts, and the Government and international community must complete preparations to ensure they would be free and fair. Japan placed priority on assistance to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, including follow-up of the Group of Eight initiative. Achieving social and economic stability in Afghanistan was an international endeavour, and UNAMA's role was more important than ever.

MOHAMMAD KHAZAE (Iran) said increased terrorist attacks in certain parts of Afghanistan, caused by criminal and terrorist groups and coupled with the pervasive drug trade, had created grave challenges. The increase in civilian casualties as a result of terrorism, and caused in part by international forces, was also a matter of concern. The hearts and minds of the Afghan people could not be won by relying on military operations. Nor would it be possible by trying to appease the extremists and terrorists who would not be satisfied with anything less than taking the country back. Rather, it would be achievable by making ordinary Afghans feel the results of international help in their day-to-day lives, through the reconstruction of infrastructure, capacity-building, education and development, among other things.

The recent increase in insecurity suggested that attempts to appease some extremist and terrorist groups were counterproductive, he stressed. The Afghan National Army and Police should be seriously strengthened, and the transfer of full national ownership over the security forces expedited. An important step in that direction would be the handing over to the national forces of responsibility for security. Poppy yields had increased and the production and trafficking of narcotics continued unabated. The magnitude of that threat required more resolute and coordinated efforts by Afghanistan and the international community.

He said it was clear, however, that the Government and people of Afghanistan continued to demonstrate their steadfast resolve not to bow to the difficulties they faced, and to work for a stable, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. They needed the support of the international community, and Iran, as well as other neighbouring countries, had a vital interest in a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. In the past six years, Iran had spent more than \$300 million on reconstruction of Afghanistan. Over the past three decades, it had extended its hospitality to more than 3 million Afghans. At present, 950,000 Afghan refugees were registered in Iran, and over a million were living in the country illegally. It was to be hoped that the international community would assist in the process of return and in helping create the conditions that would facilitate their voluntary repatriation in a more timely manner.

FARUKH AMIL (Pakistan) said there was no quick fix to the challenges of Afghanistan, which required the sustained engagement of the international community. A truly comprehensive strategy, owned by the Afghan people, was required to address the remaining intricate questions of reconciliation, security, drugs, governance and development. On the issue of security, he said the Secretary-General's report provided a myopic view of the cross-border issue; he expected due caution to be exercised in that regard in the future. Security, he said, must be addressed in all its aspects, including the threats posed by the Taliban insurgency, Al-Qaida, lingering warlordism, factional rivalries, and criminal and other illegal armed groups, as well as the increasingly strong nexus with the drug trade. Furthermore, security could not be detached from the wider issues of reconciliation, improved governance, development and reconstruction.

He said UNAMA had a central role in international efforts, having a mandate well beyond reporting on the situation. In that regard, it would be helpful if the report were to shed more light on the measures that the Mission had deployed to carry out its overall coordinating role to facilitate a more robust and delivery-oriented support process.

Aside from its Afghan brothers, he continued, no country or people had suffered more than Pakistan from the direct consequences of the decades of instability in Afghanistan. Peace would enable Pakistan to restore calm in its frontier regions, enable the dignified repatriation of remaining Afghan refugees and allow the two countries to serve as the hub for inter-regional trade and supply of energy.

Unfortunately, as a result of Pakistan's role in the counter-terrorism campaign, its security environment had deteriorated sharply. The new democratic Government of Pakistan was in the process of reaching national consensus on confronting and defeating the terrorists, following a new, holistic strategy against extremism and terrorism, employing political dialogue and socio-economic measures, but retaining the option to use force whenever required.

He said his country remained committed to working together with Afghanistan and the international forces towards defeating terrorism, but it expected reciprocal cooperation based on goodwill and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries. No foreign troops would be allowed to operate inside Pakistan, he stressed. Such actions were not helpful in eliminating the menace of the terrorists, and actually served to empower them. On the other hand, he welcomed ongoing initiatives to strengthen avenues of dialogue and cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The two sides had already agreed on a comprehensive engagement on multiple tracks, including political, military, intelligence and economic cooperation.

PIET DE KLERK (Netherlands), offering support as a donor country, said he deeply appreciated United Nations efforts in Afghanistan, and welcomed the consolidation and expansion of UNAMA. He shared the concern at the deteriorating security situation in parts of the country, as the Taliban had stepped up attacks on Government and aid workers. There were no shortcut answers, and the long-term goal of a stable Afghanistan free from terrorism should not be traded for short-term security gains.

The strongest weapon against the Taliban was a civilian one: a competent Afghan Government that enjoyed credibility among the population. He said the Government should redouble its efforts in fighting corruption and involvement in illicit activities, and in appointing officials on the basis of competence. Elections next year were a "vital test" which the country could not afford to fail, and he called for ensuring that they be conducted in a safe environment, with the Afghan security forces at the forefront. The Afghan army was doing a professional job, and he hoped to see similar developments in the police force.

He said much more progress in the area of security was needed, with a view to the elections and the Government's increased provision of basic services such as health care, education and improved infrastructure. Such features would help strengthen trust with the Afghan population and further stabilize the country.

THOMAS MATUSSEK (Germany), aligning himself with the European Union, said it was imperative that the Afghan people experience in a concrete manner the results of the reconstruction efforts undertaken by the Government and the international community. The translation of the Paris commitments into concrete political action should be accelerated. Despite the substantial challenges facing Afghanistan, it should not be forgotten that only seven years ago its people lacked access to basic health services. Their human rights were being violated and women were denied access to education or public office. The country's achievements, supported by the international community, should therefore be acknowledged. The upcoming elections in 2009 and 2010 would be an important step towards a stable and democratic Afghanistan.

Expressing his strong support for the concept of increasing Afghan ownership in all aspects of governance, he said increased Government efforts were required to improve governance and intensify the fight against corruption. The Government should also take decisive action in combating terrorism as well as the production and trafficking of drugs. Justice sector reform must continue in order to improve the human rights situation. Germany welcomed UNAMA's leading role in coordinating the international and civilian effort and underlined the need for adequate resources to implement the Mission's mandate.

Describing his country's military and financial contributions to Afghanistan, he said it was ready to double the number of German police officers and had made additional funds available to enhance UNAMA's humanitarian capacity in light of the food crisis. Germany noted with great concern the number of civilian casualties, which were due mainly to increased violent and terrorist activity by the Taliban and its allies. ISAF had taken steps to minimize the risk of unintended civilian casualties and had installed procedures for after-action review.

MORTEN WETLAND ([Norway](#)) said his country was fully committed to the rebuilding of Afghanistan. It had pledged €500 million for the Afghan National Development Strategy, making Afghanistan the top recipient of Norwegian aid. He expressed concern over “negative reporting” on developments in Afghanistan, and stressed the importance of not causing fatigue among soldiers and aid workers and others on the ground “by speaking the language of defeat and decline”. Instead, the focus should be on improvements and “nuances” in the security situation. Not all of Afghanistan was equally troubled. Three quarters of the security incidents this year had occurred in parts of the country where only 6 per cent of the population lived.

He said the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was doing an important job in helping Afghan authorities prepare for elections. The main priority now must be to assist with voter registration by providing information about the election and making it safe for everyone, particularly women, to vote. The elections must take place as planned, to demonstrate that the Taliban was losing ground. Donors who in Paris pledged their support to Afghanistan must honour their pledges; everyone should be held accountable at regular intervals, and the Afghan Government, which pledged to fight corruption and narcotics, must also be held to account.

Time must not be lost by slowing down the efforts of Special Representative Kai Eide to build a lean, professional United Nations in Afghanistan, he said. The international community had a serious obligation to continue to support him. For joint efforts in Afghanistan to succeed, it was crucial that UNAMA had the necessary resources and sufficient qualified personnel to do the job. That was the only way that UNAMA could fulfil its strengthened mandate and meet high expectations. He urged Member States and the Secretariat to support UNAMA and Mr. Eide in Afghan reconstruction.

Special Representative EIDE, answering questions raised during the debate, said political changes in Afghanistan had been welcomed across the board. On the question of coordination, he reiterated that UNAMA was a small and vulnerable mission, whose challenges had greatly increased recently. New mandates had been given to it this year alone, but it would take until May or June 2009 to garner the resources and recruit the staffing that had been mandated in March 2008. There was a gap between mandate expansion and resource increases.

He reminded the Council that there was no quick fix to the complex situation in Afghanistan. Mechanisms were being put into place for coordination, but it would take some time. He was pleased to see agreement that negative attitudes had to be changed, to hear the support promised to the new team that President Karzai now had in place and to hear support for his priorities. All those priorities required support from key donors, so it remained to be seen whether effective action would be taken.

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