



# General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

**44<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

## Agenda item 38

### The situation in Afghanistan

#### Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/552)

#### Draft resolution (A/65/L.9)

**The Acting President:** I shall now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.9.

**Mr. Wittig (Germany):** 2010 was a very important year for the future of Afghanistan. The Conferences held in London, in January, and in Kabul, in July, were important milestones. They provided guidance for the long-term cooperation of the international community with the Afghan people in their efforts to establish sustainable peace and security and to rebuild their country. These Conferences paved the way for the Kabul process, and their outcome is at the centre of the draft resolution before us on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9), which it is my honour to introduce today. As facilitator, Germany is pleased with the substantial and balanced document and the significant number of sponsors. Let me highlight the key political messages of this year's draft resolution.

First, the draft resolution welcomes the renewed commitment of the Afghan Government to the Afghan

people, and, at the same time, the renewed commitment of the international community to Afghanistan as expressed in the communiqués of the London and Kabul Conferences. These are complementary, as the commitment of the international community can only complete but not replace the engagement of the Afghan Government itself. In this vein, the General Assembly encourages all partners to constructively support the Kabul process, building on international partnerships to further increase Afghan responsibility and ownership.

Secondly, regarding security, the General Assembly welcomes the Afghan Government's plan for a phased transition to full Afghan responsibility for security, based on mutually agreed criteria and conditions and supported by international partners. The General Assembly also urges the Afghan authorities to take all possible steps to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of all United Nations, development and humanitarian personnel, and notes the importance of regulating private security contractors operating in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, on reconciliation and reintegration, the General Assembly commends the Afghan Government for holding the Afghan National Consultative Peace Jirga in June 2010 in Kabul, and expresses its support for an Afghan Government-led peace and reconciliation process, as recommended by the Jirga. The General Assembly also calls on the Afghan Government to ensure that the reintegration programme is implemented in an inclusive manner consistent with the Afghan Constitution and international legal obligations.

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At the same time, the General Assembly recalls the respective commitments made in this regard at the London and Kabul Conferences and stresses the importance of continued contributions by the international community to the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund.

Finally, the General Assembly welcomes the recent parliamentary elections in Afghanistan — which were held entirely under the responsibility of the Afghan authorities and supported by the international community — as a crucial step towards consolidating democracy in Afghanistan. In this context, the draft resolution also commends Afghanistan for the steps taken by its relevant institutions to address alleged irregularities and to ensure a credible, transparent and legitimate electoral process in accordance with Afghan laws and the Afghan Constitution.

Let me add on a personal note that I am encouraged by the fact that, among the 249 elected members of parliament, more than 27 per cent are female, which is clearly above the international average in national Parliaments.

Furthermore, the draft resolution reiterates the call for full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, without discrimination of any kind. It recalls the need to strengthen international and regional cooperation with Afghanistan in its sustained efforts to address drug production and trafficking, and expresses serious concerns about the high number of civilian casualties.

With the draft resolution, Member States strongly renew their message of international solidarity with the Afghan people and underline that transition is not synonymous with withdrawal. The draft resolution is a well-balanced call on Member States for continued cooperation with the Afghan Government in all fields. At the same time, the international community urges the Afghan Government to continue its efforts to fight corruption and fraud, promote respect for human rights, counter impunity, improve access to justice, and implement the rule of law throughout the country. The international community stands ready to assist.

Let me make some additional remarks on the position of my country.

First of all, Germany aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the Permanent

Representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union later in the debate. Let me add the following.

My country has an old and long-standing friendship with Afghanistan. Germany is among the largest contributors to the country, providing troops and development for civil reconstruction. The process begun in 2010 will lead to a more stable and sovereign Afghanistan. This process must be a political process. The solution cannot be military, even though the International Security Assistance Force is pivotal to the future of the country. In order to achieve lasting peace and political stability, the commitment of the international community can only complement but not replace the engagement of the Afghan Government itself. We believe, however, that the United Nations and its institutions will also have to play a significant role in the long term.

Let me seize this occasion by expressing our heartfelt gratitude to the men and women of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, with Staffan de Mistura at the helm, for the valiant service they provide in Afghanistan.

Germany is committed to continuing to support the Afghan people and to cooperating fully and constructively with the Afghan Government. We urge the Afghan authorities to continue their close cooperation with the international training missions. We would like to emphasize the need to focus on measures that bring tangible results for the people of Afghanistan, including in education, medical assistance and access to food and water supply, including in particular in the rural areas where 80 per cent of the Afghan population lives.

In concluding, I would like to express my gratitude to the many delegations from all regions of the world that participated actively in the informal consultations. My special thanks go to our colleague and friend Ambassador Zahir Tanin and his very able team for their trust and outstanding cooperation during our consultations.

**Mr. Grauls (Belgium):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and Ukraine, the Republic of

Moldova, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Afghanistan has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for the past three decades. Many Afghans remember their country as a stable and tolerant nation at the crossroads of cultures and civilizations. Some even speak of a golden age. We come here today in the conviction that this era will not be just in the country's past; Afghanistan's best days are still ahead.

The past decade has seen a concerted effort by the international community and Afghanistan to turn the country around. It is not just the Afghan people who stand to gain from a stable, free and prosperous Afghanistan; we all do. Tackling such global and regional threats as terrorism, militant extremism, illicit narcotics and transnational crime also means being engaged in Afghanistan. Both the heart and the mind compel us to do our part. It is an expression of humanity and a security interest for all of us.

During the past year, the partnership between the international community and Afghanistan has evolved to a new phase. It is quite fitting that, after international conferences in places such as London, Paris, The Hague, Bonn and Moscow, we finally ended up in Kabul itself. After the London Conference in January had set out the strategic framework and a series of important commitments, the Kabul Conference then outlined how these commitments would be fulfilled by the Government of Afghanistan and the wider international community.

The Kabul Conference was a milestone on Afghanistan's road towards enhanced ownership and leadership. The European Union welcomes the draft resolution before us today (A/65/L.9), which accurately reflects this new relationship between Afghanistan and the international community. We thank Germany for having successfully facilitated the informal consultations.

While resolutions, communiqués and action plans are important in this nation-building effort, ultimately it all starts and ends with the aspirations of the Afghan people themselves. Their hopes and dreams and their needs and concerns should take centre stage.

The recent parliamentary elections contributed to this new phase by contributing to Afghanistan's democratization. Many Afghans, among them more

women and young people than ever before, at great personal risk performed the empowering and emancipating act of casting their ballots. We hope that the new Parliament will now perform well and be responsive to the people. The elections were not perfect, but we have seen progress in how key Afghan institutions functioned. Lessons have been learned from previous elections. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. However, it is not for the international community but for the independent Afghan authorities, and in the end the Afghan people, to judge whether these first Afghan-led parliamentary elections were transparent, inclusive and credible. We now await the finalization of the complaints process and the announcement of the final results in due course.

The Kabul Conference established a new relationship not only between the international community and the Government, but also between the Government and the Afghan people; and like citizens around the world, the Afghan people expect results from their Government. They expect safer streets and roads, not just during elections but in everyday life. Afghan men and women expect their human rights to be respected and justice to be done. Afghans expect a Government that fights corruption harder and focuses more on creating jobs for the people. And they expect their Government to deliver such basic services as health services and education.

Living up to these expectations constitutes a daunting challenge, but the Government is not alone. The international community is there to help. The European Union will do its part to help the Government deliver. The Lisbon Treaty has made us a better partner — more unified, more cohesive and more coherent. Implementing our 2009 action plan will sharpen our focus and support the Government's policies, especially when it comes to good governance, the rule of law and development.

Let me make a few quick remarks on these three areas. First, with respect to good governance, we support President Karzai and his Government as they fight corruption and improve the management of Afghanistan's finances. In this context, the European Union will play its part in channelling more funding through the Afghan Government or multi-donor trust funds. Secondly, on the rule of law sector, the European Union will continue to fulfil an important role through the European Union Police Mission.

Thirdly, development is an area where the European Union is spending more than €1 billion a year. Many development projects depend on private security companies for their day-to-day operations. That is why we welcome the recently reached understanding on these companies and look forward to the results of the joint committee working on it.

In the short run, security is a precondition for development, and the European Union continues to assist the Government in fulfilling that peace and security precondition. This is especially true for the political challenge of reintegration and reconciliation and for the ongoing phased transition to full Afghan responsibility for security. In the long run, that relationship works the other way around, with development a precondition to security. For long-term stability, we need increased prosperity and less poverty.

*The President took the Chair.*

The European Union's commitment to Afghanistan is for the long term. Transition does not mean immediate withdrawal. We will continue to work side by side with the Afghan Government and people and with other partners in the international community. Of course, in addition to the Government of Afghanistan, one of our most important partners is the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which we firmly support in its coordination role. As security is established throughout Afghanistan, it is hoped that UNAMA will be able to establish its presence in more areas of the country. For the implementation of its ambitious, refocused mandate, UNAMA has a well-qualified leader in Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura.

All of us are working towards the same goal: a more stable Afghanistan where the authorities can assume responsibility for security and where long-term development and diversification of the economy can take place. Achieving this goal will be challenging. It will not be easy to live up to the expectations of the Afghan people. Nevertheless, as they say in that beautiful country, "There is a path to the top of even the highest mountain".

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO): the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the

Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan.

Since early 2010, Afghanistan has experienced a number of milestone events that have been key to choosing the path of its future development. The international conferences in London and Kabul launched the Kabul process and outlined the basic parameters of the process of transferring responsibility for the situation in the country to the Afghan authorities. The National Consultative Peace Jirga was held and the High Peace Council established. Parliamentary elections were generally successful. All of this has set a solid foundation for development, democratic processes and economic and social recovery in Afghanistan, helping it to become a peaceful, independent, prosperous and neutral State.

However, much more remains to be done. Above all, there remain the tasks of suppressing terrorist and extremist threats, achieving lasting national reconciliation, building competent Afghan security forces capable of ensuring law and order throughout the country, protecting the national borders and curbing drug-related criminal activity. These are the preconditions for effective governance mechanisms, restoring economic capacities and developing democratic institutions in Afghanistan.

The international presence is called on to help in fulfilling these tasks. While maintaining the central coordinating role of the United Nations in general stabilization efforts, we have entrusted the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) with the key functions of providing comprehensive security throughout Afghan territory, suppressing terrorist activity and creating an effective Afghan army and police force. The international community has ISAF with all the tools necessary to achieve their objectives. That is why they can be withdrawn from Afghanistan only after they report the completion of their mandate.

We are concerned about the rising death toll among civilians, as reflected in the 2010 mid-year report on the protection of civilians in the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Noting the progress made by the foreign military presences in minimizing the number of casualties among the civilian population, we urge them to make greater efforts to prevent such casualties. Otherwise, it will be impossible to move ahead in normalizing the situation.

Four of the seven States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization belong to the Central Asian region directly bordering Afghanistan. In this regard, we are particularly concerned about the growing instability in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, where the situation was previously relatively peaceful. We call for an end to the ineffective tactic of squeezing militants out of combat zones, which allows them to maintain their combat ability and to relocate to other parts of the country, including northern Afghanistan. We are convinced that anti-terrorism efforts should be aimed primarily at the elimination of terrorists and extremists.

The process of national reconciliation is an important component of any Afghan settlement. Our collective position on this issue is entirely clear and logical. A dialogue with the Taliban can be conducted only by the Government of Afghanistan and only if the Taliban repent, recognize the Afghan Constitution, renounce violence and break all ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. This process should be completely transparent and without prejudice to the sanctions regime imposed by Security Council resolution 1267 (1999). Any contacts with the Taliban behind the scenes are, in our view, unacceptable.

The task of curbing drug trafficking in Afghanistan remains critical. Its destructive impact and scope have spread beyond the region to become a genuine threat to international peace and stability. It is important to fight this evil throughout the entire chain of production and trafficking of drugs, from eradicating drug crops to curbing the flow of precursors, as well as including drug traffickers on the Security Council sanctions list. We urge the Government of Afghanistan and ISAF to fight the Afghanistan narcotics industry more vigorously, especially in view of the undeniable fact that drug trafficking has become a major source of funding for terrorist activities in Afghanistan.

Regional organizations, in particular the Collective Security Treaty Organization, can offer an invaluable service to the Afghan authorities and foreign military presences in their fight against the narcotics industry. The time has come to establish operational interaction between the CSTO and NATO in combating drug trafficking. We are convinced that our organization's achievements and potential for further success in this area can be very useful in effectively suppressing drug trafficking.

In this connection, I would like to note that combating drug trafficking through the joint activities of member States was listed as a primary objective from the very inception of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

The CSTO has launched a series of comprehensive preventive operations under the code name "Channel" to identify and block routes for the illegal transportation of drugs and precursors. This is a large-scale operation. It involves representatives of various drug control and law enforcement agencies, the border and customs controls of member States, homeland security organizations and financial intelligence services.

The results of the operation include the elimination of a number of drug smuggling routes from Afghanistan, the closing of international and interregional channels for the delivery of synthetic drugs from Europe, the suppression of the activities of clandestine laboratories, the prevention of leakage of precursors into illicit circulation, and, finally, the destruction of the economic foundations of drug trafficking. As of 2009, the operation had acquired the status of an ongoing project of CSTO.

Since 2003, the operation has completed some 10 active phases in which enforcement agencies from more than 20 countries, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Germany, Iran, Spain, China, the United States of America, Turkey, Ukraine, Finland and Estonia, as well as such international organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, INTERPOL and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism joined the competent authorities of CSTO member States as observers. For example, during just two stages of the operation in 2009, the coordinated actions of States led to the seizure of 116 tons of drugs. A total of over 220 tons have been seized throughout the duration of the operation through the anti-narcotics efforts of the States members of CSTO.

The initiative to establish anti-drug and financial security belts, with the participation of Afghanistan's neighbours, remains very timely. These belts help mitigate the drug threat and enhance monitoring over the transboundary movement of funds that could be generated by the illegal sale of drugs, money-laundering and other criminal activities.

Operation Channel and the assistance rendered by CSTO member States to the transit of cargoes for the International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan are examples of effective cooperation among member States in countering security challenges and threats emanating from Afghan territory. We attach the utmost importance to coordinated development and implementation of a coherent approach to Afghan issues by all international players concerned about the future of that country.

It is increasingly clear that the current fragmentation of international anti-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan is ineffective. Arguments used to justify the rejection of coordinated activities in this area are well known and unconvincing. They might be worth noting only if we were to consider the elimination of drug plantations separately from the comprehensive series of efforts to eradicate terrorism, promote stability and help recovery through the cultivation of traditional Afghan crops.

CSTO member States are convinced that the long-term stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan and the effective fulfilment of the country's objectives are impossible without an integrated approach on the part of the international community and a gradual and carefully calibrated transfer to the Afghan authorities of the responsibility for the situation in their country.

For our part, we continue to support the central coordinating role of the United Nations and encourage the further strengthening of the coordination of activities by all States and international organizations in the interests of the Afghan people and the maintenance of peace and stability in Afghanistan and the entire region.

**Mr. Tanin** (Afghanistan): I am honoured to be here today to discuss the annual draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9). I wish to extend my gratitude to all delegations that have contributed to the debate and to all of the sponsors, whose collective work on the draft resolution reaffirms their unified commitment to shaping a peaceful future for Afghanistan.

I would like to further express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Peter Wittig, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany; Mr. Daniel Krull, Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of Germany; and their entire team for their great diligence and efforts to chair the informal negotiations and

coordinate the positions of Member States in support of the draft resolution.

Last year in November, just after President Karzai's re-election, he set forth an ambitious national agenda for the following five years. In his inaugural statement, President Karzai called for all who were willing to renounce violence and accept the Afghan Constitution to join the peace process and embrace national reconciliation. He asserted the determination of the country to take the lead in ensuring security and stability, with continued international support.

He also committed to establishing a competent and clean Government, promoting good governance and fighting corruption. In his speech, the President reaffirmed the commitment of the Afghan Government to focus on economic development, growth and the well-being of the Afghan people. He laid out the objective for greater regional cooperation in all areas and, finally, expressed with appreciation the desire to further the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community.

The President's national agenda marked a new beginning for Afghanistan to stand on its own feet. The commitments made highlighted the readiness of the Afghan Government and the international community to embark on a transition to national leadership and national ownership.

In January, the international community came together for the London Conference in order to align international support with Afghanistan's efforts regarding security, governance and development, as stated in President Karzai's inauguration speech. The Conference was an opportunity to establish concrete plans for transforming Afghanistan's commitments into realities. Through our engagement with our international partners, mutual security goals were set and specific measures for tackling corruption, achieving national reconciliation and improving the delivery of basic services were presented.

In May, the Presidents of Afghanistan and the United States, with members of both Governments, met in Washington, D.C., in order to jointly assess the prospect of a successful new focus on Afghanistan. That meeting aimed at strengthening the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan, and solidified the united efforts of the two nations for sustainable cooperation, peace and stability in the region.

In June, the National Consultative Peace Jirga jump-started our reconciliation process with the aims to end violence in Afghanistan and to unify our nation. By consulting with different leaders on ideas and proposals, we began to align our peace efforts in the country. The Jirga included 1,600 delegates representing a wide variety of segments of Afghan society, including men and women from all over the country. The Conference spawned a unified call to end the miseries of this war and move together towards peace.

In July, the Kabul Conference, hosted by the Afghan Government and co-chaired by the United Nations, marked an important step forward in the ongoing process of empowering Afghanistan to assume its leadership role, which is key to a successful transition process. It was the first time that high representatives of more than 70 countries and international organizations came together on Afghan soil. The Conference furthered the international commitments made at the London Conference. The resulting agreement secured a significant increase in the level of international funding that will be channelled through the Afghan Government, reflecting renewed support for national ownership.

The Conference crafted the Kabul process, which is the new foundation for change through transition to the full responsibility and leadership of the Afghan Government. It also developed a new compact among the Afghan Government, the Afghan people and the international community. The Kabul process also has a major focus on regional relationships, encouraging improved cooperation by all regional parties. At the Conference, Afghanistan's National Development Strategy Prioritization and Implementation Plan was presented, reflecting the renewed commitment of Afghanistan's Government to building a secure and democratic future.

In September, we held our second parliamentary elections, which, as the first Afghan-led elections, represented a significant transition of leadership and responsibility to the hands of the Afghan people. The recent elections included 2,556 candidates, 406 of whom were women. Millions of Afghans cast their ballots to choose 249 members of Parliament, shaping our nation's future by strengthening Afghan institutions and building momentum for stabilization. More than 1 million votes were discounted in this election, reflecting how seriously the Afghan electoral

institutions took the issue of fairness in these elections, and marking a courageous demonstration of our resolve to regulate and protect democracy.

Throughout the year, the Government of Afghanistan made strong efforts to enhance and strengthen trust and cooperation with its neighbours and regional partners. The Government sought to involve regional players not only in peace and security, but in trade, development and economic cooperation. President Karzai visited China in March, India in April, Japan in June and Pakistan in September. He attended the sixteenth annual South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Bhutan in April. Important trilateral summits this year included those with Pakistan and Turkey in Istanbul in January, with Iran and Tajikistan in Tehran in August, and with Iran and Pakistan in Tehran in January. Afghanistan participated in a quadrilateral meeting in Sochi with Pakistan, Tajikistan and Russia, and was a guest at the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Council of Heads of State in Uzbekistan.

As we speak, the fourth round of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan is drawing to a close in Turkey, and through Afghanistan's participation, our Government seeks to promote economic cooperation with all countries of the region, international partners and financial institutions. The Economic Cooperation Organization and SAARC have played important roles in strengthening the process of regional and economic cooperation through measures facilitating regional trade and infrastructure connectivity.

With our fresh start, as mapped out by President Karzai's national agenda, and with the consistent help of the international community, this first year — our year of refocus — was marked by hard work and rewarded by notable progress. Despite our busy calendar, we have made substantial strides in the areas of economic growth and advancing human rights, moving ever nearer to our national goals.

While challenges remain ahead, progress has been made in all areas, including economic advancement, women's rights, education and health. Our average income has quadrupled since 2001, and Government revenue in the past year surpassed \$1 billion for the first time. Women will make up over a quarter of our Parliament after the recent elections, while they already account for 18 per cent of

Government employees. There are now more than 1,000 women in the Afghan National Security Forces, and we have ambitious plans to increase this number in the coming years. Women and girls now have equal access to education, and make up 37 per cent of the 7 million students in Afghanistan. The 71 per cent student enrolment rate is also a sign of our success in improving education in our country. We have built 4,000 school buildings in the past nine years and plan to build 2,900 more by the end of 2013. Furthermore, through the provision of basic health services to nearly 90 per cent of our population, health care in Afghanistan has improved greatly. Our immunization efforts have helped millions of children, and infant and under-five mortality rates continue to improve.

Important steps have been taken to promote good governance and the rule of law and to fight corruption. The Government of Afghanistan has made progress in this regard, including through the establishment of the Senior Appointments Panel and strengthening the power of the High Office for Oversight and Anti-Corruption. Last year, our commitment to good governance was demonstrated by the prosecution of dozens of corrupt officials.

Our fight against narcotics has seen progress over time. The number of poppy-free provinces has been maintained at 20, and there has been a major reduction in the production of opium this year. Meanwhile, our efforts to fight illicit narcotics continue as we work with regional and international partners on all aspects of this global challenge.

Security is the most immediate and critical challenge facing Afghanistan, and it is also the most basic building block of progress. The Taliban and its allies continue their attempts to increase insecurity and spread violence to new parts of the country. The violent campaigns of the Taliban and Al-Qaida have killed thousands of innocent men, women and children. They have further destroyed our economy and what we have worked so hard to build over the past decade. Our aim is to stop this momentum, and despite the challenges we continue to make important strides in the fight against terrorism. This year, Afghanistan's partners and friends have increased the strength of forces engaged in disrupting and defeating the murderous activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. As we meet here today, Afghan and international forces continue fighting together to stop terrorists and the violent activities of armed groups.

With all the important steps taken throughout the course of the year, and with international support, my Government is prepared to intensify its efforts and to work together to launch the transition process. We are committed to taking the lead in combat operations in volatile provinces by 2011 and assuming full responsibility for security efforts, with the support of the international community, by the end of 2014. It is a gradual and conditions-based process that relies on the full support of our friends and partners in helping to build the size, strength and operational capability of the Afghan Security Forces.

Afghans know that, ultimately, it is the responsibility of our own forces to defend the country and provide security for our people. Therefore, a new focus on the accelerated training and equipping of the Afghan National Security Forces is vital to security and a successful transition. We hope that, at the end of this transition period, the Afghan army and police will be able to take full responsibility within Afghanistan as intended.

We have increased the numbers of the National Security Forces significantly. With the help of our partners, we now have approximately 130,000 soldiers and 106,000 police personnel. We plan to increase those numbers to 171,000 soldiers and 134,000 police personnel by October 2011. The strengthening and development of the Afghan armed forces largely depend on the immediate end to parallel private security structures. In the coming years, the Afghan armed forces will require the continued commitment and sustained support of NATO and our main allies and partners.

Later this month, a NATO summit of heads of State and Government will be held in Lisbon, Portugal. The Summit will be another important milestone in our partnership with NATO. Among the important issues to be discussed will be Afghanistan's transition strategy. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with NATO and expect to establish the steps needed for a long-term partnership between NATO and Afghanistan that will endure beyond the completion of NATO's combat mission.

Nevertheless, military strategies alone are not sufficient for the success of stabilization efforts. The peace process necessitates national reconciliation, outreach to the people of Afghanistan, and sustainable



partnerships with the region and international community.

Reconciliation and reintegration of former combatants is critical for establishing peace and security in our country. It is a reasonable and responsible policy to open the door for reconciling those who would like to join the peace process. We are not only committed to such a policy in word, but have embraced it through our actions.

First, efforts for achieving peace and security include outreach to the armed opposition, which has led to their inclusion in peace talks, while our Government and international partners continue to end the armed activities of the enemies of peace and progress. Throughout our reconciliation process, human rights, including the rights of women, remain a high priority.

Secondly, outreach to the Afghan people is more than a communications strategy. Afghans from all segments of society should be more actively involved in the political arena and play a role in promoting security, defence and development. We must ensure an environment in which all Afghan people feel that they are the masters of their own destinies. This will enable them to participate in the betterment of Afghan society.

Thirdly, regional cooperation is vital for peace and security in the country. In order to address terrorism, extremism, and narcotic drug production and trafficking, we must have meaningful cooperation and conduct sincere and effective dialogue with our neighbours. Closing sanctuaries in the region where terrorists continue to receive training as well as financial and logistical support is a necessary element for eliminating terrorism.

In addition, Afghanistan is firmly committed to enhancing economic cooperation in the region. We recently signed several trade agreements that seek to increase bilateral and multilateral trade and create opportunities for prosperity. Afghanistan is a connecting bridge between Central and South Asia, and all could benefit from economic cooperation, trade, and investment. That can be enhanced within the new framework of regional cooperation based on mutual and diverse commitments.

Essential to our efforts is the continued support of our friends and allies. We appreciate their commitment and sacrifices, despite the economic struggles of recent

years. We aim to work actively together to move beyond today's military activities and share our motivation for establishing stability and long-term cooperation.

It is important to consistently assess our efforts. At the same time, we must recognize the progress we have made as well as the need to allow time for transition to continue in this moment that is ripe for change. The strength of our partnership with the international community is crucial for the stability of our people and the peoples of the world.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude for the sincere support and commitment of the United Nations and other international partners to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan. We have confidence in the successful outcome of that steadfast support.

The current draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9) is a reaffirmation of the commitment of the international community to the betterment of our country. We know all too well the seriousness of the challenges ahead, but with the strength from enduring, and now overcoming, decades of war and tragedies, as well as with the sustained support of international partners, our nation can emerge, united for peace and prosperity.

Our continued transition is not only about handing over leadership to the Afghan Government, but also transforming our entire national landscape and culture from one afflicted with war to one that is graced with peace.

**Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan):** It is my honour to speak today on behalf of the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and my country, the Republic of Kazakhstan, on agenda item 38, "The situation in Afghanistan".

First of all, allow me to express the strong commitment of the SCO member States to make a contribution to the overall international effort to address the existing problems of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, including through the SCO Contact Group.

The prevailing situation in Afghanistan and the scope of its future political stability and economic

development were high on the agenda of the tenth meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the SCO member States held in Tashkent on 10 and 11 June 2010. The declaration adopted by the Council underscored the importance of attaining peace and stability in Afghanistan and the leading role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of the international community in resolving the situation in that country.

The SCO stands for achieving durable peace and speedy stabilization of the political situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, recognizing the importance of full respect for the deep historical, ethno-demographic roots and traditions of the people of Afghanistan, as well as their diverse religious values.

The SCO confirms its unwavering commitment to Afghanistan's becoming a peaceful, self-sufficient, stable and democratic State free of terrorism and narcotics. It also supports the Afghan Government-led peace process, especially in their implementation of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme, which aims to promote dialogue with those elements in opposition to the Government that are ready to renounce violence, break ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations, denounce terrorism and accept the Afghan Constitution, in full respect of the implementation of measures and procedures introduced by the Security Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1822 (2008), 1904 (2009) and 1917 (2010), as well as other relevant resolutions of the Council.

In that context, SCO member States note with satisfaction the direct assistance rendered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in that process. We also support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/65/552).

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization calls for the implementation of the commitments made at the International Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul on 20 July 2010 to further strengthen stability in Afghanistan, support the Kabul process of transition to Afghan authorities of the responsibility for governing their country, as well as international efforts for the

effective implementation of projects for the economic reconstruction of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

We welcome the parliamentary elections, which were held on 18 September this year, and commend the preparations undertaken for conducting them under very difficult military-political conditions. The conduct of elections by the Afghans themselves demonstrates a forward step in the process of creating the conditions for stabilization in Afghanistan over time.

The success of the Kabul Conference and the Afghan parliamentary elections confirm once again the stance of the member States, as reflected in the Tashkent Declaration, namely, that it would be impossible to solve the Afghan problem solely by military methods.

Member States of the SCO consider the strengthening of regional security and stability in Central Asia as one of our regional organization's highest priorities in the context of its efforts to counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. It is difficult to conceive of safety and stability in the Central Asian region without addressing those problems in Afghanistan. The SCO is therefore seriously concerned about the current situation in the country where these threats originate. We therefore draw attention to the report of the Secretary-General, which states that the overall number of security incidents increased by 69 per cent in the current reporting period, which in turn imperils the security of our region and of the whole world. We therefore press for a collective, multilateral effort to urgently combat those dangers, which are on the rise. Achieving peace and stability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is a crucial factor for ensuring overall security to promote the sustainable social and economic development of the region.

We are seriously concerned about the increasingly elevated number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, and reaffirm that all parties to armed conflict must take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians at risk. We also call for all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and for all appropriate measures to be taken to ensure the protection of civilians.

Owing to the serious threat to the security of SCO member States, individually and collectively, we call

on the international community to take urgent and prompt measures to combat, in particular, the illicit trafficking of narcotics, which finances and supports the powerful infrastructure and network of international terrorism.

We believe that the production and trafficking of drugs in Afghanistan and beyond have given rise to drug-related crimes that pose a threat not only to national but also to regional and international peace and stability, as stated in Security Council resolution 1943 (2010). The SCO member States therefore urge the international community to develop a global strategy to effectively counteract that rampant form of criminality, and call upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, together with the International Security Assistance Force, to cooperate in that effort, as well as to persevere in implementing the National Drug Control Strategy.

The SCO has acquired formidable and long-standing experience in fighting terrorism, extremism and separatism. Our member States are committed to working in cooperation with the United Nations and other national and international structures to assist Afghanistan's efforts in that direction. The basic priorities for action are set out in the declaration adopted at the SCO special conference held in Moscow in March 2009.

We aspire to actively help the friendly people of Afghanistan rebuild their independent, neutral, peaceful and prosperous State. We recognize the need to consolidate our efforts with those of the United Nations, other regional and international organizations and key players, as well the parties involved in the high-level international conferences on Afghanistan.

We also call for the full implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to Afghanistan.

**Mr. Grube (Denmark):** I would first of all like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

At the outset, I would like to use this opportunity to welcome the parliamentary elections held in September in Afghanistan. Those elections constituted an important achievement for Afghanistan in that, for the first time, they were organized and managed by Afghan institutions. The performance of both the

Afghan electoral institutions and the Afghan National Security Forces deserve our recognition. Above all, it is a very welcome development that Afghan institutions have managed to organize and conduct an exercise as difficult as those elections.

I also take note of the progress achieved in other aspects of those elections in that the Afghan Parliament now has 68 seats out of 249 reserved for women. It is imperative that women participate in all decision-making that affects their lives. Without the meaningful and real participation of women, it will be difficult to attain a peaceful Afghanistan. We now look forward to the announcement of the final election results and to the establishment of the new Parliament in Afghanistan.

We are approaching yet another milestone in the development of a stable Afghanistan at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in two weeks' time. While transition is an important component of the declaration on Afghanistan that will be adopted in Lisbon, it is important to maintain that the international community and the United Nations will continue to play a strong supporting role in Afghanistan in the years to come.

Denmark, for its part, is not about to leave Afghanistan. In line with the conclusions of the Kabul Conference, we will focus even more on strengthening the capability and capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and on broader civilian capacity-building, while gradually becoming less engaged in direct combat operations. We support and encourage the transition of lead responsibility to the Afghan authorities, but this will have to be based on the conditions on the ground and the overall capacities of Afghan institutions, not least the Security Forces.

Denmark fully supports the international partnership with Afghanistan. Through that partnership, we will continue to assist the build-up of Afghanistan's capabilities to manage its own affairs. Therefore, the partnership wishes to stress that transition does not mean exit. Our intention is clear: we will stay committed to the Afghan case and we will continue to increase our focus on the civilian aspects of the agreed transition framework. As a demonstration of that commitment, Denmark will strengthen its support for the rule of law sector and the area of governance, both at the national level and in Helmand province.

That having been said, I want to reiterate that a sustainable transition hinges on the ability of the

Afghan Government to ensure security, demonstrate progress in governance and provide basic services. The Afghan Government must therefore demonstrate results in both socio-economic development and institutional reform, including increased transparency and sustained efforts to fight corruption. We welcome the commitments undertaken by the Afghan Government in that regard at the Kabul Conference. It is important to devote all our focus to the actual implementation of those commitments and the benchmarks set.

We also took note of the Peace Jirga and its conclusions with regard to reintegration and reconciliation. It was welcome that the Kabul Conference further endorsed the strategy of the Afghan Government in that regard. Denmark supports that process and encourages all countries engaged in Afghanistan, including its neighbours, to play an active and constructive role. At the same time, we must all work to ensure that the progress achieved so far — also in terms of the fundamental rights of the Afghan population — is not sacrificed as part of a political solution.

I also want to extend my compliments to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, and his staff for all their efforts. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is carrying out an ambitious mandate under difficult circumstances. Denmark will continue to support UNAMA, and would welcome its broadened presence across the country, with a view to enabling more efficient coordination in Afghanistan.

A strong United Nations is important in all countries, but particularly in post-conflict settings, where the Organization is most needed as a strong and reliable partner able to provide the essential peace dividend. In that regard, we support the increased engagement of United Nations funds and programmes in Afghanistan. They play a pivotal role in enhancing the Afghan Government's ability to deliver public services to the population in an efficient, effective, equitable and accountable manner. That is key to strengthening broad public participation and creating an environment that is conducive to sustainable livelihoods and ensuring long-term stability and development.

In closing, I want to commend the Assembly for concluding its negotiations on the draft resolution (A/65/L.9). The fact that we are here today to vote on

the important subject of Afghanistan proves to me that Afghanistan remains at the forefront of everyone's attention, and I am convinced that we will continue to work together to reach a future stable Afghanistan.

**Mrs. Smith** (Norway): Since 1979 the General Assembly has repeatedly gathered to reiterate the key message contained in the draft resolution (A/65/L.9) that this Assembly will act on shortly: a manifestation of common responsibility and commitment to support the Afghan people in securing a brighter future. Norway is again pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution, which recognizes the important progress Afghanistan has made in rebuilding itself but also acknowledges that more work has to be done. We commend in particular Germany for that delegation's able facilitation of the draft resolution.

Today's draft resolution reflects the fact that Afghans must take increasing responsibility for their own affairs. A steady and responsible transition to Afghan leadership is a key to sustainability. It also reflects a new, evolving partnership between Afghanistan and the international community, based on trust and joint commitments. The draft resolution reminds us, however, that the transition will be a complex task rather than an easy one. Some may think that the transfer of increased authority to the Afghans is a euphemism for a quick solution or premature exit. On the contrary, it requires a lot of hard work, political will and systematic efforts by all actors; but without a robust Afghan leadership we will not succeed.

In that regard, the draft resolution fits well into the key message from the Kabul Conference, which called for a renewed partnership between Afghanistan and the international community, reinforced by a deepened contract between the Afghan State and its citizens. From now on, the international community should respect Afghanistan's own visions and priorities, and also demonstrate greater unity of purpose and better coordination. More funds have to pass through Afghan budgets, to the extent that the Government's limited capacity to absorb the resources allows. This means shifting away from quick-impact projects, parallel organizations and multiple uncoordinated projects towards enabling Afghan institutions to design and implement specific Afghan national programmes. It is well documented that so-called quick-impact projects carried out by military forces rarely bring about stability or achieve what they set out to do. We will continue to stress the need for a

clear division of roles between military and civilian efforts, while the humanitarian space is shrinking.

In return, the Afghan Government has to bring about real change in the lives of the Afghan people by delivering justice and good governance, combating corruption and improving public services. This is not merely a desire on the part of the international community but first and foremost the demand of the Afghan people. The Afghan leadership must, it is true, enable political processes that are inclusive and truly national in their nature. A pluralistic society with enhanced participation is essential if durable peace, stability and development are to be achieved. Civil society institutions and their capacity to deliver services deserve greater attention than has hitherto been the case, as does their ability to monitor human rights, even as investment in rebuilding State institutions continues. All of these are ambitious goals but not unrealistic ones. We are hopeful, because the Kabul Conference showed that we have a shared vision on how to move forward.

A durable peace requires a political settlement. The Peace Jirga expressed a national consensus for peace and framed the terms on how to reach out. Furthermore, the Peace Jirga also identified poor governance and abuse of authority as one of the causes of instability. To sum up: injustice, corruption and weak governance are all strategic concerns.

Norway strongly supports an Afghan-led political process — including talks with those members of the armed opposition who are willing to renounce violence and resume a civilian life — as part of a viable Afghan political settlement. Any political process should be based on the principle of inclusiveness and be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and international human rights.

Furthermore, a durable peace requires that talks move towards a structured political dialogue, conducted in a way that allows for the participation of civil society groups, including women. The participation of women is key to any durable peace process, since they constitute half of the population of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, it is often the ordinary Afghan people who lose out in the ongoing struggle for power. We must strive to prevent this. The Afghan people need to be included in a meaningful way and have their rights protected, if a durable peace process is to be achieved.

Parliamentary elections were held in September, despite the grave security situation. It is too soon to pass final judgement, as the results will not be clear until the Afghan electoral institutions have finished counting the votes, verified the results and adjudicated complaints. However, in the future, it will be important to meet the need for long-term electoral reform by strengthening the capacity of Afghan electoral institutions. Though it will be a long-term task to develop a political system that today's divided population regards as legitimate, we encourage such an Afghan-led reform process, which should emphasize civic education as well as efforts to strengthen Parliament as an institution.

Let me emphasize that, in a time of transition, the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is critical, particularly as the international guarantor of the integrity of the transition to greater Afghan leadership. Norway condemns the terrorist attack on the United Nations facilities in Herat on 23 October. Sadly, that attack was another brutal reminder that security and stability in Afghanistan are still a long way off.

In conclusion, let me underscore that Norway will continue to work towards stability and a safe and secure environment for Afghanistan and its region. We are committed for the long haul, as transition does not mean exit. However, we are prepared for a changing environment. This demands a certain flexibility and the ability to make adjustments in our civilian support when necessary. Together with its international partners and in close cooperation with the Afghan Government and Afghan civil society, Norway will continue its efforts to build sufficient capacity so that Afghans can safely run their country.

**Mr. Ragolini (Italy):** While aligning itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, Italy would like to add a few remarks to today's discussion.

Italy welcomes, supports and is a sponsor of the draft resolution before us on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9) and looks forward to its adoption by consensus. That will confirm the ongoing commitment of the United Nations and all its Member States to assisting Afghanistan on the path towards autonomy, stability and democracy, in line with the principles of effective partnership agreed at the Kabul Conference last July.

As was stated at the Kabul Conference and reiterated at the meeting with the Special Representative for Afghanistan and the Special Envoy for Pakistan in Rome on 18 October, the transition will entail a gradual shift to an international presence with a strong civilian focus, which will enable the Afghan authorities to undertake a parallel assumption of responsibilities in security, governance and development. That joint endeavour will seek to lay the institutional and economic foundations for a stable and independent Afghanistan, through an incremental process based on gradualism, ownership and the ongoing assessment of agreed and verifiable parameters.

Italy is firmly committed to that course of action. Our focus is on the training and mentoring of the Afghan National Security Forces and the development of institutional capacities at the local and central levels. We are working on improving living conditions and gradually moving from humanitarian assistance to the promotion of local entrepreneurship, capitalizing on existing natural and human resources. Those factors are, we believe, key to sustainable and balanced development.

We are persuaded that the growth, governance and stability of Afghanistan are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. We therefore encourage prompt implementation of the national development programmes endorsed at the Kabul Conference and a renewed effort to address shortfalls in governance, rule of law and transparency. It is incumbent on the Afghan Government to take concrete action to meet its people's demands for basic services, justice and economic opportunities. More effective regional cooperation, involving the most significant countries for the stability of the region, will also play a key role in promoting security and development in the country.

Italy looks forward to the outcome of the parliamentary elections, which represent a crucial test of Afghan ownership and accountability and a further step towards a functional democratic dynamic. We acknowledge the efforts already made to ensure the transparency and credibility of the whole process and commend the increasing democratic awareness of the Afghan people. Along the same lines, we reiterate the urgent need for an overall and inclusive long-term reform of the electoral process, under the aegis and with the assistance of the United Nations.

In that regard, we also wish to express our gratitude to all the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and especially to Special Representative De Mistura, for their pivotal role in coordinating the numerous initiatives in support of the elections and in ensuring the coherence of the international effort in Afghanistan.

*Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

In preparation for the upcoming transition process, we reaffirm our long-term commitment to facilitating the achievement, for the benefit of the Afghan people, of non-reversible and credible objectives in the fields of security, governance and development.

**Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (spoke in Russian):** First of all I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. Tajikistan aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the representative of the Russian Federation on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and by the representative of Kazakhstan on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Tajikistan is pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/65/L.9, which will, we hope, be adopted today by the General Assembly by consensus, as in previous years. In that regard we express our sincere appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany for its efforts and mediation in the discussions leading up to the draft resolution.

Tajikistan and Afghanistan are connected by many historical and cultural ties. The official visit of President Emomali Rahmon a week ago to Kabul, his talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the package of bilateral agreements signed as the outcome of that visit have once again demonstrated the aspirations of our two countries to further strengthen existing bonds, develop an enhanced, mutually beneficial cooperation in varying fields and strengthen good-neighbourly relations. We fully support the efforts of the Afghan Government to achieve national reconciliation undertaken on the basis of the decisions of the Peace Jirga.

We congratulate the leadership and people of Afghanistan for successfully holding general parliamentary elections in the country. We welcome the

efforts of the international community, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force, aimed at establishing lasting peace and stability in that long-suffering country.

Tajikistan is also making its contribution to the process of establishing sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan. My country is providing specialized training centres for training and retraining staff from Afghan law enforcement agencies, in particular the regional college of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was established two years ago in Dushanbe. Clearly, our common language will contribute to the training of Afghan experts in Tajikistan. Undoubtedly, the fight against drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime requires the use of military force. However, it is not possible to eradicate those threats by the use of military force alone. To ensure a peaceful society, it is necessary to rebuild the economy and restore the agriculture and infrastructure of the country.

In this context, Tajikistan stresses the need for wider use of Afghanistan's economic capacities and vast natural resources. That is an important factor in solving many problems of the country, which has been devastated by years of war. In the current environment, energy is critical to rebuilding the devastated economy of Afghanistan. Hydropower plants currently operating and those under construction in my country are capable not only of meeting Afghanistan's needs for clean and affordable energy but also of promoting broad agricultural development through the restoration and improvement of the irrigation system in Afghanistan. In that context, I would like to stress the importance of projects related to building power transmission lines passing through the territory of Afghanistan, in particular the Central Asia-South Asia 1000 project and the PTL Solar Sangtuda-Mazar-e-Sharif-Herat-Mashhad project. We also support the project of building a pipeline from Turkmenistan through the territory of Afghanistan to Tajikistan and Pakistan, which, in addition to filling the needs of the region for natural gas, will also create a reliable income source for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, because of its favourable geographic location, can play an important role in the development of regional integration processes. With globalization, the value of Afghanistan's geographical location as a crossroads linking different regions of the Asian

continent can only increase. Tajikistan fully supports the development and implementation of infrastructure projects in the field of transportation and communication in Afghanistan and in the entire region. Such promising projects as building a rail line to Herat from Sherkhan Bandar, as well as the Mazar-e-Sharif to Hairatan and Aqina to Sheberghan and Turghundi to Kushka rail lines, are expected to be completed in the future. The connection of Sherkhan Bandar with Lower Panj in Tajikistan and Hairatan with Mazar-e-Sharif and Aqina with Imam Nazar in Turkmenistan and Turghundi with Kushka in Turkmenistan as well as Herat with Torbat in Iran will turn this route into a transit railway of regional importance, which will bring significant annual profit to Afghanistan. Those and other priority projects were adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, whose latest meeting was held in May in Dushanbe. Currently, there are five road bridges across the border river Panj that connect Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Construction projects for additional bridges at the Tajik-Afghan border are under consideration.

Tajikistan and Afghanistan are connected by a fibre-optic communication line. Tajikistan is ready to increase the number of such lines with Afghanistan, which in turn could provide a stable link between Afghanistan and other countries in the region.

Establishing peace and security in Afghanistan will largely depend on extensive and effective international and regional cooperation as well as on sincere and consistent efforts by the international community to achieve the goals that resonate with the hopes and aspirations of the Afghan people. We express our hope that the General Assembly draft resolution before us will serve that noble goal.

**Mr. Barimani** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General and Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and all his colleagues in that Mission for their firm commitment and valuable dedication to strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan. The central role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts in that country is of paramount importance and enjoys our full support. I would also like here to salute the sacrifices made by United Nations personnel in Afghanistan.

We are very pleased at the progress achieved in all areas so far by our brotherly neighbour, in particular with regard to security and order and the formation of representative political institutions. The Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the recent parliamentary election held in Afghanistan and congratulates its people for their participation in an election that was considered to be of high importance for a better future of the country. The recent election was to a great extent an Afghan-led and Afghan-managed process where even the allegations of misconduct were investigated by Afghan authorities in accordance with Afghan law.

The achievements and progress made in Afghanistan have been overshadowed by the present challenges prevailing in the country. Challenges such as insecurity, lack of infrastructure, narcotic drugs and the issues related to refugees remain sources of major concern.

Foreign forces entered Afghanistan with the aim of establishing peace and security and of rebuilding the country. Nine years have passed since then. According to many official reports, there has been an increase in the degree of insecurity compared to last year, which is a clear indication that the increase in the number of foreign troops and military operations does not necessarily contribute to solving problems in Afghanistan; rather, it adds to the degree of violence there. One reason for that situation is the disenchantment of the people with regard to the conduct of those foreign forces.

The Afghan Government officials say that 9 million people in Afghanistan are living in extreme poverty, while two years ago only 5 million Afghans lived under the poverty line. The recent floods across Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries have worsened the situation and caused a rise in the price of such food products as rice, cooking oil and meat, which has put many Afghans, who are among the poorest people in the world, at a high risk of food shortages.

In the meantime, it is odd that a United States Government audit has found that nearly \$18 billion of the money paid to thousands of American firms to rebuild war-ravaged Afghanistan remain unaccounted for. The question remains: where has all that money gone? Is it not that all that money has gone to fill the pockets of big weapons manufacturers, security contractors and so forth?

It is now high time to analyse the developments during the past nine years, since the start of the military takeover of Afghanistan, in order to see exactly in which areas there has been progress and in which areas there has been a lack of progress. We should also avoid using stereotyped or imported prescriptions and admit that security and development are interlinked. Insecurity has the most severe adverse effects on development, and underdevelopment is a viable threat to security. Our approach should be based on the realities on the ground and on social structures and historical experience.

It is now clear that the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, who have undergone many hardships and much suffering in recent decades, cannot be won by relying on military operations. Instead of dispatching more troops and private security contractors to the country, there is an urgent need for the foreign forces to leave Afghanistan. There is also an urgent need to strengthen the Afghan national army and national police to enable them to take charge of security in Afghanistan. It is also urgent that the control and management of Afghan affairs be handed over to the people and the Government of that country.

It is crystal clear that the narcotic drugs problem is still one of the most serious challenges that Afghanistan is facing. That menace has hindered the country's progress towards development and has endangered the security of Afghanistan, along with that of the region. Moreover, narcotic drugs, as the financial source of terrorism in Afghanistan, have served as a breeding ground for terrorists, extremists and illegal groups who are attempting to destabilize the Afghan Government. Fortunately, during the past year, according to the recent Afghanistan Opium Survey issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, there has been a drop in the production of narcotic drugs, the main reason for which has been plant infections.

For decades, Iran has been at the forefront of a full-scale war against the smuggling of narcotic drugs. Thousands of Iranian law enforcement personnel have lost their lives or have been injured, and billions of dollars have been spent to combat drug traffickers. We have shouldered a great burden in that fight and strongly reiterate our call on those who bear the responsibility for combating narcotic drugs on behalf of the international community to take firm and measurable steps to curb that threat as soon as possible.



On the issue of Afghan refugees, it is worth mentioning that we have extended our hospitality to more than 3 million Afghan nationals over the past three decades. At present, more than 1 million Afghan refugees are registered in Iran, while a great number of unregistered Afghans are also living in our country. For years, Afghan nationals have continued to enjoy Iran's educational and welfare facilities, inter alia, and to benefit from the same subsidies that our own people receive.

Despite the challenges in Afghanistan, much has been achieved by the country in its journey towards stability, security and development. We believe that the new approach by the Government of Afghanistan, adopted in a very prudent and clever manner and aimed at moving the country towards development and the building up of its infrastructure, is a great achievement. The Kabul Conference held in August this year provided us with an opportunity to reassure Afghans that, as they continue their journey, the international community, including neighbouring States, stand with them, offering their help and support.

Iran, along with other neighbouring countries and the world at large, has a vital interest in a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbours. In recent years, we have undertaken some projects, mainly relying on our own resources, aimed at rebuilding the country with a focus on infrastructure and capacity-building. So far, the Islamic Republic of Iran's official assistance to Afghanistan for those projects amounts to approximately \$500 million.

In the area of regional cooperation, the countries neighbouring Afghanistan share critical interests in Afghanistan's security and long-term stability and are playing their role in promoting Afghanistan's socio-economic development. This week, a conference on a regional approach to developments in Afghanistan was held in Tehran, during which the role of neighbouring countries was elaborated and some concrete measures were taken to strengthen a regional framework in helping Afghanistan with development projects. We intend to work within that framework, which was adapted from a successful cooperation model employed by countries neighbouring Iraq. The support of the international community in that endeavour could help us to strengthen this approach.

In that context, several rounds of meetings have also taken place among the heads of State and Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tajikistan. In that regard, UNAMA's involvement in encouraging regional countries to cooperate in putting an end to the narcotics trade and the illegal movement of people and supporting Afghanistan in its efforts to achieve security and stability are very much welcome.

Let me conclude by expressing our hope for a better and more prosperous future for Afghanistan. As in the past, we extend our full support to the people and Government of Afghanistan in achieving security, stability and comprehensive and sustainable development for the country.

**Mr. Quinlan** (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to speak in this debate and to endorse and sponsor the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9).

Australia's own Parliament is itself in the middle of a debate on Afghanistan and our commitment to it. There is no more serious, or difficult, work than building the defences of peace. The Australian Government has reaffirmed that we remain committed to international efforts to build a more secure and stable Afghanistan.

We welcome the international community's renewed support, expressed through the London and Kabul Conferences, as well as the new determination by the Afghan Government to support the Afghan people. We encourage the Afghan Government to continue to address the commitments it made in London and Kabul, particularly regarding combating corruption and ensuring access to justice for all Afghans.

We also encourage all international partners in Afghanistan to support the Kabul process — the centrepiece of the Conference held there — with its focus on Afghan leadership and ownership. The September parliamentary elections reflected such ownership. We acknowledge the efforts made by Afghan institutions to put in place measures to ensure a credible, transparent and legitimate election and to address alleged irregularities themselves.

Nonetheless, we believe that long-term electoral reform is required if the Afghan public's confidence in democratic institutions is to be strengthened. The

Afghan Government's commitment made at the Kabul Conference to initiate, within six months, a strategy for long-term electoral reform is an important first step, but only a first step.

Australia also welcomes the recognition in today's draft resolution of the Afghan Government's plan for a phased transition to full Afghan responsibility for security, with the Afghan National Security Forces leading and conducting military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014.

The commitment of Afghanistan's international partners to support the Afghan Government in creating the conditions necessary to allow for transition is obviously critical. Security transition should not, as other speakers have said today, be seen as the end of our commitment in Afghanistan. Transition does not signal withdrawal. After transition to Afghan-led security, we must recognize that Afghanistan will continue to require support for training, defence cooperation and aid and development. During Australia's current parliamentary debate on Afghanistan, Prime Minister Gillard explicitly recognized that when she said that

"Australia will not abandon Afghanistan, but we must be very realistic about the future. Transition will take some years. We will be engaged through this decade at least".

Australia recognizes that the conflict in Afghanistan will not be won by military means alone; it requires a political strategy. We welcome the fact that the draft resolution highlights the steps that have been taken in this area over the past year, including the holding of the Afghan National Consultative Peace Jirga in June and the establishment of the High Peace Council.

A long-term solution in Afghanistan ultimately requires reconciliation between the Afghan Government and insurgents. The reconciliation efforts being led by the Afghan Government need to be consistent with the conditions it itself has set, including accepting the Afghan Constitution, renouncing violence and severing links to terrorist groups. These undertakings need to be met and observed in practice. Australia itself is supporting the political strategy, including through our \$25 million commitment to the Afghan Government's peace and reintegration programme, conditional on the establishment of

appropriate governance arrangements and a role for donors in the management of the fund.

Australia believes that the Security Council-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) strategy — which focuses on a comprehensive and integrated civilian-military approach, protecting the population and building Afghan capacity — provides the best prospect for a stable and secure Afghanistan. Australia is the largest non-NATO contributor to ISAF, and the tenth largest overall. In addition, since the London Conference in January, we have delivered a 50 per cent increase in our civilian commitment, including by providing a senior civilian to head the provincial reconstruction team in the southern province of Uruzgan.

We have also increased our aid to Afghanistan by 50 per cent this year, to a total of \$123 million. We are aligning our assistance with the priorities outlined by the Afghan Government itself under the Afghan National Development Strategy. We are also committed to channelling at least 50 per cent of this aid through Afghan Government systems, consistent with our undertakings at the Kabul Conference in July.

As we know, progress is always slow, but it is being made by the Afghan Government and its partners. In primary education, school enrolments increased from 1 million in 2001 to around 6 million today. Some 2 million of those are girls. There were none in 2001. Nothing better symbolizes the fall of the Taliban than 2 million Afghan girls learning to read.

In basic health services, infant mortality decreased by 22 per cent between 2002 and 2008. Immunization rates for children are now in the 70 to 90 per cent range. In vital economic infrastructure, almost 10,000 kilometres of roads have been rehabilitated, and 10 million Afghans now have access to telecommunications, as compared to only 20,000 in 2001. There are other indicators of progress.

Australia's own major efforts remain concentrated in Uruzgan, where we are seeking to improve the Afghan Government's capacity to deliver core services in health, education and transport, including through public infrastructure, and, critically, to generate job opportunities.

Our capacity-building effort in the province also includes the important work being done by the police, as we help build and develop the Afghan National

Police capability to assume greater responsibility for law and order in the province. We have now trained almost 1,000 Afghan police personnel in Uruzgan. Our efforts have also contributed to the successful targeting of corrupt officials and the tackling of major crimes, including in the area of counter-narcotics.

We have many challenges to face with regard to policing, the lack of public confidence being one. Access to justice is another. Women in Uruzgan province, where our police are mainly based, have almost no access to justice and suffer from poor knowledge of their rights. There are only three female Afghan police officers in the major town of Tarin Kowt, but that is three more than was previously the case. Progress always involves such small, incremental steps, but it is progress nevertheless.

Such civilian enhancements build on Australia's military contribution — we have some 1,550 defence personnel deployed in Afghanistan. The focus of their effort remains on training and mentoring the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade in Uruzgan so it can conduct independent security operations.

Of course, we want to bring those Australians home as soon as possible; and the Afghan people want to stand on their own as soon as possible. But achieving the shared mission we have is critical to achieving both of those objectives. The commitment of the international community remains central to that purpose. The Security Council authorized the creation of ISAF in 2001, through resolution 1386 (2001). That resolution has been renewed on 10 occasions since. ISAF now has a combined coalition force in the field of some 120,000 troops from 48 nations. More than 70 countries and international organizations attended the London Conference, and around 70 the Kabul Conference in July. In that context, we recognize in particular the important role that Afghanistan's neighbours have to play.

To conclude, Afghanistan's international partners recognize the need to defend, maintain and strengthen an international order that does not tolerate the activities of international terrorist organizations. Our collaboration has protected that international order and made it increasingly difficult for international terrorist organizations to do harm anywhere — and to all of us. Australia would encourage others to protect the citizens of our nations by standing firm against international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida,

so that they will not find safe haven again in Afghanistan.

**Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil):** I have the honour to acknowledge the presence of two representatives of the Brazilian Parliament in the General Assembly Hall, namely, Senator Sérgio Zambiasi from the state of Rio Grande do Sul and Senator Antonio Carlos Valadares from the state of Sergipe.

The annual debate of the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan offers a valuable opportunity for us to reaffirm our common endeavour to support the Afghan Government and its people in their commitment to a peaceful, stable and prosperous country. This year it is also an opportunity to pay tribute to the important work carried out by Special Representative Staffan de Mistura and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) despite the difficult circumstances in which they operate.

Since our last debate, there have been significant developments in the efforts to strengthen Afghanistan's responsibility for its own security, governance and development. President Karzai's inaugural speech in November 2009 initiated an important transition process in the drive to increase Afghanistan's ownership of its own future. This was symbolically reflected in the holding of the first international conference on Afghanistan on Afghan soil in several decades. The Kabul Conference renewed the partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community. Its outcomes deserve the General Assembly's strongest support.

One of the most important elements of that reinvigorated partnership is the process of transitioning to full Afghan responsibility for security on the basis of mutually agreed conditions. Progress in meeting these conditions will depend not only on improving the recruitment and training of Afghan forces; another key factor will be providing those forces with the assistance and equipment needed to perform their functions in a very challenging environment.

This is all the more critical since 2010 has unfortunately turned out to be the most violent year in Afghanistan since current international operations began. Brazil deeply regrets the growing numbers of civilian casualties, the majority of which continue to be caused by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups. The efforts and progress made by

pro-Government forces in reducing civilian casualties should be recognized, although more can still be done.

There is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, as we all know. Brazil supports the Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration process, aimed at those who renounce violence, break ties with terrorist groups and accept the Afghan Constitution. The Afghan National Consultative Peace Jirga expressed the Afghan people's clear commitment to reconciliation and their conditions for it, demanding a just peace that will not jeopardize the political and social achievements made so far and that guarantees the rights of all citizens, including women and children. We welcome the establishment of the High Peace Council, as well as of the Salaam Support Group, recently announced by UNAMA.

The attachment of the Afghan people to a peaceful and democratic Afghanistan was also evident during the recent parliamentary elections. Afghans once again defied violence and logistical constraints to conduct vibrant campaigning and cast their votes. As we await the final results of the election, we encourage the Independent Electoral Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission to continue to carry out their duties in accordance with Afghan law and free from interference from any side. As soon as the current electoral process is concluded, focus on long-term electoral reform will be needed, as foreseen in the Kabul process.

The principles of effective partnership recognized in the Kabul Conference marked a significant breakthrough in international cooperation with Afghanistan. The international community undertook to significantly increase the aid it channels through the Afghan budget and to realign off-budget aid with Afghan national priorities. We look forward to the timely implementation of this commitment and underline the key role of the United Nations, both in coordinating international civilian assistance to Afghanistan and in strengthening Afghan capacity to coordinate aid.

The issue of counter-narcotics remains a serious concern in Afghanistan. As it is everywhere else, addressing this challenge in Afghanistan is a common and shared responsibility. Countries of production, transit and consumption must play their roles. We commend the efforts of the Afghan Government to fight drug production in its territory and trafficking

from it, and encourage greater subregional and regional cooperation in this regard. Such cooperation should be founded on respect for Afghan sovereignty and be aimed at strengthening national institutions and providing alternative livelihoods. The important role of agricultural development in this context cannot be overstated. Yet none of the Afghan efforts will be enough without corresponding efforts to prevent the trafficking of chemical precursors into Afghanistan and, above all, to reduce demand and consumption abroad.

Brazil is fully committed to enhancing its contribution to peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, not only through its action in the Assembly and the Security Council, but also through our bilateral relations. My Government has decided to open a resident embassy in Kabul and, at the request of the Afghan Government, recently sent a technical mission to identify areas for cooperation in several fields, including agriculture and mining. We see this as a stepping stone for closer collaboration in the future.

As an expression of such interest, my delegation is happy to once again sponsor the draft resolution facilitated by the mission of Germany (A/65/L.9), to whom we are grateful. We expect that it will enjoy strong support in the General Assembly.

**Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing the wish of Indonesia to see Afghanistan as a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous homeland for its people, in full accordance with their aspirations.

Much has been achieved by Afghanistan in the past few years. Both the national authorities and civilians are to be commended for their work in extremely arduous circumstances, and for their resilience vis-à-vis the ongoing difficulties.

We fully understand that the Government and people of Afghanistan are still confronting enormous challenges. From security and development to citizen-responsive justice and administrative machinery, there are many bottlenecks. There are also challenges in properly equipping and training the national army and police, but none that cannot be tackled and solved if Afghanistan, with the full support of the international community and the United Nations, remains on the path of betterment that it has charted for itself.

The processes of Bonn, Tokyo, the Afghanistan Compact, Paris and The Hague and the outcomes of the London and Kabul Conferences this year are vital milestones. They reflect the will of the international community as well as that of Afghanistan. The Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan taking place this week in Istanbul is also critical.

We must all remain true to the commitments made and support the Afghan Government so that it too delivers on its promises effectively. In that regard, Indonesia supports and sponsors draft resolution A/65/L.9, and we thank Germany for its efforts in facilitating it.

Indonesia commends the Government of Afghanistan for the priorities that it has set out, particularly through the Afghan-led peace and reintegration programme, which we hope will be sustained and nurtured carefully. It is very important for Afghanistan, as well as for the international community, that Afghanistan succeed in its national reconciliation.

The Indonesian experience with promoting national peace also leads us to share the values reflected in the "Vision for Afghanistan 2020" document, which are articulated in the Afghan National Development Strategy. Improving economic conditions remains at the heart of people's problems in Afghanistan. Where there has been progress — and indeed there has been — it needs to be consolidated and nurtured.

We appreciate the emphasis of the Government on strengthening the agriculture sector. We are also of the view that the counter-narcotics effort should continue to be taken as part of an integrated national development and peacebuilding exercise. The people need to be provided with legal and viable income-earning opportunities.

With regard to Indonesia's commitment, my Government is continuing to conduct several training and capacity-building programmes for Afghan officials. These programmes cover the areas of agriculture, small- and medium-enterprise development, agro-business technology, public health, waste management, public administration reform and multi-disaster risk management. We will always be keen to share Indonesian experience and know-how with Afghanistan.

Today, my delegation has listened to very important repeated expressions of support by countries with regard to helping Afghanistan develop its army, police and other essential public services. That is critical in order for the Afghan Government to succeed, inter alia in its goal of having its national security forces lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. In that context, we are also mindful of the need for all forms of international assistance, including security assistance, to take into account the views of the Afghan people and Government. National ownership is indeed critical.

Indonesia remains deeply concerned about security conditions in Afghanistan. Even now, what Afghanistan has accomplished is continuously being undermined by serious challenges to its security and stability. In that regard, we continue to deplore increasing activities by militants and insurgent forces, including attacks on innocent civilians. We also condemn the wanton attacks on workers of the aid community and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), who sacrifice their lives to bring relief to common Afghans. Serious challenges therefore continue to confront the Government of Afghanistan. The international community has a major stake in ensuring that those challenges are met with persistence and vigour.

I also wish to underline that a cooperative and strong partnership between Afghanistan and its neighbours is crucial in order to tackle the security challenge comprehensively and effectively and find lasting solutions. We therefore welcome the commitment of Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours to enhance collaboration for regional peace, security and prosperity.

With regard to UNAMA, my delegation believes that the Mission remains pertinent in the country. Indonesia commends UNAMA for its very valuable work in arduous circumstances. We support its continued role in supporting recovery and rehabilitation efforts, as well as its assistance in coordinating the global assistance effort. However, we feel concern about the obstacles relating to the security situation in the country, which continues to hinder the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

To conclude, let me reiterate Indonesia's full commitment to helping Afghanistan succeed. We are ready to help in any way we can so that a nationally

reconciled, united, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan becomes a reality in the very near future.

**Mr. Kodama** (Japan): Japan welcomes this opportunity to address the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan. We are pleased to sponsor the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.9). Given the challenging situation Afghanistan faces today, it is of particular importance to demonstrate the unity of the international community in supporting Afghanistan by adopting this draft resolution by consensus. Appreciation is also due to our colleagues in the German delegation, who led the consultations on the draft resolution. I also express my sincere gratitude to the men and women of Afghanistan and to the international community, who have demonstrated their deep commitment to the reconstruction of the country.

The Government of Japan welcomes the publication by the Independent Electoral Commission of preliminary results on the lower house election on 18 September. We pay tribute to the Afghan authorities concerned, including the Commission, who participated in the election process, and the international community, which supported that process. We praise the participation in the election by Afghan citizens, despite the security risks, so that they themselves could decide their own future.

Japan expects that the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan will proceed smoothly under the new democratically elected Parliament. As we know, the Electoral Complaints Commission is now conducting its adjudication of complaints and reviewing the candidates alleged to be involved in electoral violations. We highly commend these efforts and hope that the final results of the election will be announced with proper considerations. Also, we would like to stress the importance of longer-term election reform. It is necessary that the international community continues its support for Afghanistan's efforts in this area.

At the successful Kabul Conference in July this year, important progress was made towards stabilizing and reconstructing Afghanistan when the Afghan leadership presented its national priority programme, to which the international community committed to align its assistance. At the same time, as was reaffirmed at the Kabul Conference, it is essential that the Afghan Government undertake the necessary reforms to strengthen its financial management capability and to

reduce corruption. The coordination and monitoring of aid through the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is important for achieving progress in the Kabul process. Together with its partners in the international community, including the United Nations, Japan continues to assist the Afghan Government to improve that capacity.

As Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan stressed in his address at the General Assembly (see A/65/PV.14), Japan will provide assistance in such a way that the people of Afghanistan will be able to perceive tangible improvements in their lives. Focusing on the three priority areas of security, reintegration and development, Japan will provide assistance of up to \$5 billion to Afghanistan over five years, taking into consideration the priority areas of the Afghan Government.

As pointed out in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/552), the security situation has continued to deteriorate in many parts of the country. Improving security in Afghanistan is an essential prerequisite for its reconstruction. In order to strengthen Afghan security forces so that Afghans can take over responsibility for their own security, Japan will continue to provide assistance for the salaries and equipment of the Afghan National Police. We have also decided to provide funding and instructors for the training of Afghan policemen in Turkey.

We appreciate the Afghan Government's announcement of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the High Peace Council. Japan disbursed a \$50 million contribution to the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund. We call for the swift implementation of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme through the effective use of the Fund.

As for development, Japan believes in the importance of showing results through quick-impact projects while maintaining a mid- to long-term perspective. We are providing assistance that is particularly focused on the development of human resources and infrastructure and the development and rebuilding of the agriculture sector and rural communities.

Stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan cannot be achieved without the cooperation of those neighbouring countries that have close ties with

Afghanistan. Japan actively maintains a dialogue with Afghanistan's neighbours. It is our hope that the stability of Afghanistan will be realized through close cooperation with a number of regional institutions. In that context, we welcome the fourth meeting of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, held yesterday in Istanbul.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Japan's continued support for the nation-building efforts of Afghanistan. We hope that Afghanistan's commitment to realize its future remains unchanged.

**Mr. Haroon** (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan wishes specifically to thank the President for convening today's meeting on Afghanistan. This meeting is an annual opportunity for the General Assembly to review the progress made towards peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

Conflict and human tragedy in Afghanistan are now three decades old. No other country has suffered more than Pakistan from their consequences. It has impacted our social and economic fabric, disturbed the peace and tranquillity of our border regions and given rise to the common threat of extremism and terrorism. The people of Pakistan have shared sorrow and grief with our Afghan brothers.

The road to peace and prosperity in Afghanistan can only be travelled with the active engagement of the United Nations and its Member States. Today's annual debate in the General Assembly, as well as the quarterly debates in the Security Council, helps in navigating our way on this very difficult road.

This year, the international community's collective journey towards peace and prosperity in Afghanistan was largely facilitated by the London and Kabul Conferences, which have now generated optimism that a destination is in sight. The London Conference marked the assumption of responsibilities by the Afghan Government, and the Kabul Conference articulated comprehensive benchmarks and timelines for the transfer of those responsibilities.

As the Afghan Government assumes greater responsibilities in the areas of security, governance and economic and social development, it will need this house's continuing support. The efforts of the Afghan Government and its international partners are required for the Kabul process to succeed. Those efforts must be focused on priority areas, with appropriate sequencing

and coordination. It is our sincere hope that parties on both side of this equation will fulfil their respective roles and carry out their responsibilities.

To sustain peace and economic development in Afghanistan, a stable political system based on popular support and the participation of the Afghan people is essential. In that context, we greatly value the recently held Wolesi Jirga elections. These elections showed the commitment of the Afghan people to democracy and democratic institutions, despite numerous challenges and the history behind them. They also demonstrated the administrative efficacy and efficiency of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), under the able leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Staffan de Mistura.

The Secretary-General's latest report on Afghanistan (A/65/552) highlights many positive developments in Afghanistan. The report also states that prospects for peace in Afghanistan continued to be overshadowed by the deteriorating security situation. The Secretary-General's note of caution merits and requires the Assembly's serious attention and consideration.

We believe that the vexing question of security, in a society suffering from four decades of war, cannot be addressed by imposing another war. Military action alone is not, and will not be, a solution to Afghanistan's problems. Yet, currently, some of the partners engaged — specifically those who are running the larger numbers of forces, as illustrated recently in Bob Woodward's book — are not in favour of anything less than a full-scale counter-insurgency. That requires serious consideration.

The Secretary-General has rightly observed the importance of peace, reconciliation and reintegration in the context of security. This was also at one time part of the Rydell initiative, which has now been put on the back burner. But we share the Secretary-General's view that a viable reconciliation process is vital for durable and long-term peace in Afghanistan.

Pakistan supports an Afghan-led and inclusive reconciliation process to bring opposition groups into the political mainstream. We therefore welcome the establishment of the High Peace Council in Afghanistan and the establishment of the Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund. These are significant steps. It is our hope that the General Assembly and the Security

Council will continue to be willing partners of the Afghan Government in the reconciliation process.

Pakistan has always emphasized the importance of regional unity to deal with the challenges of security and development in Afghanistan. In that regard, the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan all have a special role in its stability. Pakistan is engaged with other countries in a number of important regional initiatives on Afghanistan. Those initiatives aim at greater regional connectivity, with a view to promoting economic and commercial cooperation and rooting out the menace posed by narcotics, terrorism and extremism.

Bilaterally, cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan spans the entire spectrum of political, economic and cultural relations. There is continuous dialogue and regular exchange of visits at the highest levels. Our two countries have successfully concluded the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, which upgraded a previous agreement that was signed in 1962. Even today, with floods in our country and many other problems, we continue to supply reliable assistance in response to the needs of Afghanistan.

In September this year, President Hamid Karzai visited Pakistan. The joint statement issued after the visit outlines a detailed course of action to further strengthen our partnership in five key areas: security and counter-terrorism; economic cooperation, transit, trade and investment; infrastructure development and connectivity; and energy linkages and capacity-building in education, health and agriculture.

Although Pakistan is engaged in several reconstruction and developments projects in Afghanistan — including building hospitals, roads and educational institutions — regrettably, United Nations Development Programme projects have not used our technocrats or taken advantage of their experience.

We have doubled the number of scholarships offered to Afghan students for higher education in Pakistan. With new enrolments under the extended scholarships programme, the number of Afghan students in our colleges and universities is set to reach 6,500 this year. Their fields of study include medicine, engineering, business, agriculture, information technology and social sciences. We will continue our modest contributions to the development of Afghanistan, despite the financial constraints resulting from the recent floods.

In the area of security, Pakistan's engagement with Afghanistan and its international partners is robust. A viable institutional medium of our security and intelligence cooperation is the Tripartite Commission, which also includes the United States and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). That cooperation is essential to cement the gains in the campaign against terrorism and extremism. May I remind the Assembly that, after Afghanistan, we remain the largest sacrificers in this field of conflict.

The interdiction of illegal cross-border movements is vital to countering terrorism, drug trafficking and commercial smuggling. This is a joint responsibility, and one that needs to be addressed more rigorously. Accordingly, Pakistan has established 1,000 border posts. More than 120,000 Pakistani troops are deployed on our side of the border with Afghanistan, at a considerable burden to our financial resources. That is not the case on the other side, where there must be an increase. We rightfully expect Afghanistan, NATO and ISAF to reciprocate with active deployment and patrolling on their side.

Pakistan has housed over 3 million Afghan refugees for the past three decades. Despite isolated spells in voluntary return, we still host over 1 million Afghan refugees inside Pakistan. Nobody should underestimate the enormous social, economic and security costs borne by us. However, we are committed to the dignified return of all Afghan refugees. We would like to stress the need for strengthening reintegration programmes for refugees under Afghanistan's development strategy. There is a need for more diligent and sustained efforts at creating necessary pull factors in Afghanistan for the return of refugees to their country. We find a slackening in interest on the part of the United Nations and the international community to assist in this endeavour — which, with all its necessary resources, it must do.

We greatly value the role of UNAMA. The United Nations has an important role in coordinating a comprehensive international effort in Afghanistan. Pakistan would welcome the enhancement of that role in political and security fields.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Peter Wittig and his team in the German Mission for leading the process of consultations on the draft resolution (A/65/L.9) before us. We believe that the text addresses all the relevant



issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We are happy to sponsor the draft resolution and urge all Member States to adopt it by consensus.

**Mrs. Miculescu (Romania):** In addition to the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, I wish to make some brief remarks in my national capacity.

The discussions revolving around the General Assembly's draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/65/L.9), as well as the Security Council's quarterly debates on the subject, are excellent opportunities to underline the instrumental role of the United Nations in that country's stabilization and reconstruction process.

Romania is honoured to be a sponsor of the draft resolution, which has been introduced by Germany. We call on the General Assembly to adopt that document without a vote, as a clear reaffirmation of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan and a reflection of its hope that it will continue to make progress towards achieving a better life for its people.

With the conferences held earlier this year in London and Kabul, the Afghan Government and the international community entered into a new phase of partnership concerning the way to ensure full sovereignty and ownership by the Afghan people and authorities. In the same vein, we were heartened to learn that the Kabul process is on track, as confirmed during the recent Security Council debate by the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, whom we congratulate on his endeavours.

At the same time, we are aware of the challenges faced by Afghanistan and the international community. We fully share the opinion expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/65/552) that the progress achieved is fragile and continues to be overshadowed by the deterioration in the security situation.

But failure is not an option, and if the Kabul process is to advance it is paramount that we all be on the same page concerning the priorities set by the Afghan Government to take over full responsibility for security and governance where and when circumstances permit. Romania is of the opinion that the transition process should be driven more by the

fulfilment of the appropriate conditions and less by a calendar of fixed deadlines.

Since 2002 my country has been actively engaged in the international efforts in Afghanistan. Our military contribution is — we think — significant and reliable and its mandate is diverse, ranging from training the Afghan forces and operational mentoring to the close protection of United Nations officials. Currently, there are over 1,600 Romanian soldiers on Afghan territory, predicted to reach 1,800 by the end of this year, deployed mainly in the southern province of Zabul.

Our presence in Afghanistan means more than troops, for we are of the opinion that success cannot be guaranteed through military efforts alone. There is no security without good governance and social and economic development, and that is why Romania is doing its best to assist Afghanistan in various other ways, including offering scholarships to Afghan nationals and contributing to the European Union Police Mission.

Romania has contributed as much as it can to bringing peace and security to Afghanistan. We have not recoiled from danger when our soldiers have made their heroic tribute to liberty, along with so many Afghans, as well as civilians and soldiers from countries around the world. As long as the Romanian presence is requested by Afghanistan, we shall accomplish our mission. We are inspired by the fortitude and courage displayed by the Afghan people and authorities during the recent parliamentary elections. I would say that this fortitude and courage epitomize the strong will of this people, who have had such an intensely challenging history, to build a stable, democratic and prosperous country.

Concluding my remarks, I would like to stress that a comprehensive approach to Afghanistan and the efficient use of resources are now more important than ever. The Afghan people and authorities and the relevant international organizations and actors need to work together, while avoiding unnecessary duplication. If the Kabul process is to become a success story, we need vision, efficiency, solidarity and, last but not least, teamwork.

**Ms. Dastidar (India):** At the outset, I would like to express India's appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for scheduling this discussion on a subject of great significance for us, our region and the world. I also commend the German delegation for

coordinating intergovernmental negotiations in an excellent manner, which has led us to the annual General Assembly draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, which is traditionally adopted by consensus. As we have done for the past several years, we are happy to co-sponsor this year's draft resolution (A/65/L.9).

The efforts of the international community in Afghanistan have increasingly focused on security, development, governance and regional and international cooperation issues, with the overall objective of the Afghan Government eventually assuming full responsibility for and taking charge of Afghanistan's destiny. There have been significant political developments this year, including the London Conference, the Kabul Conference and the parliamentary elections.

The Kabul Conference marked a new phase in the partnership of the Afghan Government and the international community — the Kabul process — and a renewed commitment to a secure, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. The Conference demonstrated the Afghan Government's determination to take full responsibility for Afghanistan's own development, security and governance and the international community's willingness to realign international assistance in accordance with Afghanistan's priorities and action plans.

As for India, our great poet, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, called on us all — Moguls, Chinese, Pathans, Aryans and non-Aryans — to get together and cooperate to give and take in solidarity to ensure universal and regional peace.

The success of the Kabul process largely depends on detailing and implementing the commitments flowing from the Kabul Conference. Tangible and sustained improvements on the security front are a prerequisite for realizing these shared goals. Indeed, improved security could create an enabling environment for accelerated progress on development and governance issues. This is also critical to expanding the footprint of the Afghan Government and to ensuring the greater ownership of these processes by the Afghan people. If these processes are to be enduring, Afghan ownership should go hand in hand with Afghan leadership.

The holding of National Assembly elections on 18 September was an important step forward in

strengthening the democratic framework in Afghanistan. India appreciates the resoluteness and determination of the Afghan people who participated in these elections, notwithstanding threats and intimidation by the Taliban. I would be remiss if I did not place on record our appreciation for the Afghan Government's lead role and the critical supportive role played by the United Nations and the international community in organizing the elections.

India's relationship with Afghanistan is multifaceted and characterized by civilizational, trade and cultural exchanges stretching back to antiquity. India is committed to the unity, integrity and independence of Afghanistan, underpinned by democracy and cohesive pluralism and free from external interference. India has contributed to these goals through our development partnership, which is implemented entirely in accordance with the priorities of the Afghan Government and people. Our assistance programmes are spread all over Afghanistan and cover all sectors of development: humanitarian, infrastructural, institutional and capacity-building, small-scale quick gestation projects and agriculture. The ultimate aim of our assistance, which presently stands at over \$1.3 billion, is to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan State and people to stand on their own feet in the areas of governance and services for the Afghan people.

Turning to the regional aspect, Afghanistan's stability and economic development depend a lot on its neighbours and the region as a whole. Afghanistan's greatest economic potential perhaps resides in its immense potential as a trade, transport and energy hub and as a bridge linking Central, West and South Asia and the Gulf. Its prosperity also depends on the consumer market of nearly 1.5 billion people in the South Asian subcontinent.

However, in order for this to materialize Afghanistan's neighbours need to come together to forge greater regional cooperation and facilitate trade and transit. We must expand, rather than hinder trade, transit and transport ties, including overland transit and trade. That is the best way of bringing the regional dimension into play in a positive manner.

Growing economic interdependence will also help in weaning disaffected youth away from insurgency and militancy and in creating a zone of prosperity in the region. We support the wishes of the

Government of Afghanistan to take the lead in this direction.

Peace and reintegration efforts in Afghanistan can succeed provided they are fully Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, carry all sections of Afghanistan's population together, and abide by the redlines agreed to at the London Conference and later reaffirmed at the Kabul Conference: giving up violence, cutting off all links with terrorist groups and accepting the democratic and pluralistic values of the Afghan Constitution, including women's rights.

Moving forward, it is important that the international community keep in mind the lessons learned from past experiences in negotiating with fundamentalist and extremist organizations and to ensure that any peace process is conducted in an inclusive and transparent manner. Adequate capacity of the Afghan security forces and other Afghan institutions is a *sine qua non* for protecting Afghanistan's sovereignty, plurality and democracy. The gains of the past nine years stand to be squandered if this aspect does not receive the attention it deserves as the international community ponders its next steps regarding Afghanistan.

The security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar e Toiba and other terrorist and extremist groups operating within and outside Afghanistan's borders. The fight against terrorism cannot be compartmentalized. It is essential to ensure that support, sustenance and sanctuaries for terrorist organizations outside Afghanistan are ended forthwith.

It is worrisome that, despite a reinforced presence of the International Security Assistance Force, there has been a continuing deterioration in the security environment. The most recent report of the Secretary-General (A/65/552) notes that there has been a 69 per cent increase in security incidents compared to the same months in 2009.

In conclusion, in the arduous journey towards lasting peace, prosperity and stability in Afghanistan, the Afghan Government needs a long-term commitment from the international community if it is to successfully confront the challenges that lie ahead while it progressively takes charge of its own destiny. The international community must remain steadfast in

its commitment to supporting Afghanistan. The Kabul Conference was a major step in the right direction. We welcome these efforts and are fully supportive of them. We appreciate the good work done by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Parham** (United Kingdom): When the General Assembly met last year to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, we identified the importance of driving forward the process of Afghanization. This meant working with the new Afghan Government to build up its security forces, build constructive relations with its neighbours, make progress on reconciliation, improve local governance, deliver services for all Afghans, continue to expand the economy and tackle corruption.

The Kabul Conference held earlier this year was a key step in Afghanization. It was an unprecedented event for Afghanistan, bringing together over 70 countries and international organizations, including the United Nations, NATO, the European Union and the World Bank. We commend both the Afghan Government and the United Nations for the success of the event, and the personal commitment of both President Karzai and the Secretary-General. The Conference showed the world that Afghanistan is increasingly able to run its own affairs.

The Kabul Conference established the Afghan-led Kabul process, which will accelerate Afghanistan's accountable governance, reduce dependence on the international community, enhance the capacity of Afghan security forces and ensure better protection for the rights of all its citizens. International donors, including the United Kingdom, have committed themselves to realigning their funding behind the Kabul process. This in itself is a significant achievement for a country as beset by conflict and poverty as Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government has already made progress on its Kabul Conference commitments. We strongly welcome the establishment of the High Peace Council, the opening of the Human Rights Support Unit in the Ministry of Justice, and the agreement of the three international members of the anti-corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. It is important that all partners continue to support this process constructively.

Although the security situation remains serious, steady progress is being made across Afghanistan, and specifically in Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

Afghan forces and the International Security Assistance Force have slowed the momentum of the insurgency. The areas under the control of the Afghan Government are increasing. However, the situation remains extremely challenging. We pay homage to those in the Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Force who have lost their lives.

It is essential that partners now work together to agree on the process of transferring lead responsibility for security across Afghanistan to the Afghan security forces in 2015. This security transition does not mean that the partners are looking for an exit from Afghanistan — far from it. The United Kingdom is clear that we want to have an enduring relationship with Afghanistan.

We regret deeply all civilian casualties caused by international forces. The statistics compiled by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) itself show a continued decline in their numbers. The United Kingdom will continue to work to minimize these casualties even further. In contrast, the Taliban and their fellow insurgents continue to account for an increasing number and proportion of civilian deaths — some 86 per cent of those where attribution can be determined, according to United Nations figures.

Regional cooperation is essential for ensuring security, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan. We welcome the ratification of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, which will enable both countries to benefit from increased links. We also welcome the positive outcomes of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which was held earlier this week in Istanbul to promote further economic cooperation among Afghanistan, regional neighbours and international partners.

Finally, let me reiterate the United Kingdom's continued support to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and to Special Representative De Mistura. UNAMA does vital work in difficult circumstances in promoting greater aid coherence and effectiveness, in supporting the Afghan Government during the recent elections and in longer-term electoral reform, and in important political outreach.

This General Assembly debate is an important opportunity to reaffirm our shared long-term commitment to Afghanistan and to its stability, security

and prosperity. For its part, the United Kingdom will see through its commitment to Afghanistan with rigour and determination.

**Mr. Herczyński (Poland):** Let me start by stating that Poland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the Ambassador of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We also wish to thank Germany for its significant efforts in facilitating the process of consultations, which resulted in the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.9).

The annual debate on the situation in Afghanistan is the best opportunity to underline the prominent role the United Nations plays in that country. The coordinating role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the activities undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, enjoy our full support and respect. The need to ensure coherence and facilitate cooperation among the international actors present in Afghanistan is essential to the stabilization and development of that country.

A year has passed since we debated in this Hall on the situation in Afghanistan (see A/64/PV.40 and A/64/PV.41). That year has been marked, on the one hand, by the second inaugural speech of President Hamid Karzai and, on the other, by recent parliamentary elections. We have also witnessed renewed mutual commitments made by the international community and the Afghan authorities at the international conferences in London and Kabul.

Poland has always found it necessary to ensure the continuous support of the international community for Afghanistan, especially in the field of strengthening the capabilities of the Afghan security forces. My country's involvement in Afghanistan demonstrates our sense of responsibility for the situation in that country, which still poses numerous threats to international peace and security. We hope that this year's decision by the Government of Poland to increase the number of Polish troops to 3,000 — 2,600 in Afghanistan and an additional 400-troop reserve force, deployable in case of emergency — will significantly contribute to building a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

We strongly believe that the key to a peaceful and secure Afghanistan lies in the hands of the Afghans themselves. The conferences in London and Kabul formulated a realistic framework for the transfer of responsibility for the security situation in the country

to the Afghan authorities. Poland, being actively engaged in the Kabul process, takes into consideration Afghan aspirations, expressed inter alia by President Karzai, including that the transfer of responsibilities should end by 2014.

The success of the Afghan-led process of reconciliation and reintegration will be one of the factors leading to the creation of a stable and secure Afghanistan. In this regard, we note the debate in the framework of the Peace Jirga last June and the recent nominations for the High Peace Council.

Since 2008, Poland has been responsible for the security of the province of Ghazni. We cooperate with central and local authorities in building conditions conducive to the transfer of responsibilities. We stand ready to continue our support through training, contributions to the capacity-building of Afghan security forces and development aid. As of today, more than 20 per cent of our military personnel present in Afghanistan have been engaged in training and mentoring activities.

As the Polish Foreign Minister, His Excellency Radosław Sikorski, noted in his address during the high-level plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010 (see A/65/PV.6), Afghanistan exemplifies the interconnection between security and development. Without either, stabilization fails. In 2010, our development aid directed to Afghanistan amounted to

\$12 million. Our plans for 2011 foresee projects in the fields of strengthening stability, advancing national reconciliation and improving Afghans' daily life.

Poland stands ready to share its own experience in the field of successful political transition. This is already the case with regard to local governance and the creation of a civil service based on merit.

Let me finally make a few comments on the recent parliamentary elections. These elections, conducted entirely under the responsibility of the Afghan authorities, constituted an important step forward towards democracy and normalization. In the light of a very difficult security situation, we particularly applaud the relatively high turnout, as well as the active engagement of young and female candidates and voters. Now it remains of utmost importance to strengthen the electoral framework in order to provide a transparent and credible basis for future elections.

Afghanistan will need our continuous support in the stabilization and reconstruction efforts for some years to come. As the transition of responsibilities proceeds, Poland will stand ready to assist our Afghan partners in consolidating the progress already achieved on the security front, as well as in strengthening institutions, good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*