



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

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

Wednesday, 27 November 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Muhammad-Bande ..... (Nigeria)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Gafoor (Singapore), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda item 114 (continued)

### Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

#### (a) Election of members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

##### Note by the Secretary-General (A/74/446)

**The Acting President:** Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

The Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General, circulated in document A/74/446, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee that will occur on 31 December 2019 upon the expiration of the terms of office of Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Haiti, the Republic of Korea and Senegal. Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that after 1 January 2020, the following States will remain members of the Committee: Angola, Argentina, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Cuba, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Pakistan,

Paraguay, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Those 25 States will therefore not be eligible in this election.

I should now like to inform Members that the following six States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council: the Comoros, Liberia and Mauritania for the three seats for the African States; China and the Republic of Korea for two of the three seats for the Asia-Pacific States; and Uruguay for the one seat for the Latin American and Caribbean States.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Asia-Pacific States and the Latin American and Caribbean States is equal to or lower than the number of seats to be filled in each of those groups.

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May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council, namely, China, the Comoros, Liberia, Mauritania, the Republic of Korea and Uruguay, elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2020?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** I congratulate the States that have just been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Members are reminded that two vacancies remain for a term beginning on the date of election by the General Assembly, to be filled by one member from among the Latin American and Caribbean States for a term expiring on 31 December 2020 and one member from among the Western European and other States for a term expiring on 31 December 2021.

I should like to inform members that the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of one member from among the Asia-Pacific States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2020 and expiring on 31 December 2022.

The General Assembly will be in a position to act on those vacancies upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114.

#### **Agenda item 115 (continued)**

##### **(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences**

###### **Note by the Secretary-General (A/74/123)**

**The Acting President:** As indicated in document A/74/123, since the terms of office of the representatives of Austria, China, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Morocco and the United States of America will expire on 31 December 2019, it will be necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint seven members to fill the resulting vacancies. These members will serve for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2020.

Consequently, after consultations with the Chairs of the Groups of the African States, the Asia-Pacific States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States, the President of the General Assembly has appointed Algeria, Austria,

China, the Comoros, Jamaica, Japan and the United States of America for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2020.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

##### **(g) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit**

###### **Note by the Secretary-General (A/74/84)**

**The Acting President:** As indicated in document A/74/84, the General Assembly is required, during the current session, to appoint members to fill the vacancies on the Joint Inspection Unit that will arise from the expiration of the terms of office on 31 December 2020 of Ms. Aicha Afifi (Morocco), Mr. Petru Dumitriu (Romania), Mr. Jeremiah Kramer (Canada) and Mr. Gönke Roscher (Germany).

As also indicated in document A/74/84, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries, in this case four countries, that would be requested to propose candidates for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

As further indicated in the document, the General Assembly, by its resolution 61/238, of 22 December 2006, decided that beginning on 1 January 2008, the President of the General Assembly, when drawing up the list of countries that would be requested to propose candidates, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Unit, will invite Member States to submit the names of the countries and their respective candidates simultaneously, on the understanding that the candidates submitted are the candidates that the respective Member States intended to propose, to the extent possible, for appointment by the Assembly, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute.

Having held the necessary consultations with the regional groups, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the following information received from the Chairs of the regional groups: for the one

vacancy from among the African States, Eritrea is the endorsed candidate; for the one vacancy from among the Eastern European States, the Republic of Moldova is the endorsed candidate; and for the two vacancies from among the Western European and other States, Germany and Spain are the endorsed candidates.

I would like to remind members that in accordance with Assembly resolution 59/267, of 23 December 2004, the proposed candidates should have experience in at least one of the following fields: oversight, audit, inspection, investigation, evaluation, finance, project evaluation, programme evaluation, human resources management, management, public administration, monitoring and/or programme performance, as well as knowledge of the United Nations system and its role in international relations.

Therefore, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Unit and resolution 61/238, Eritrea, Germany, the Republic of Moldova and Spain will be requested to submit the names of candidates and the curricula vitae highlighting the candidates' relevant qualifications for the tasks ahead.

After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the President will submit the names of the candidates to be proposed by Eritrea, Germany, the Republic of Moldova and Spain to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 115.

**(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/74/525/Add.1)**

**The Acting President:** In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mohamed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth of Mauritania as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2020.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mohamed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth

of Mauritania as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2020?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**(j) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/74/545)**

**The Acting President:** In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Tomoya Yamaguchi of Japan as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2020.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to appoint Tomoya Yamaguchi of Japan as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on 27 November 2019 and ending on 31 December 2020?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 36**

**The situation in Afghanistan**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/348)**

**Draft resolution (A/74/L.13)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.13.

**Mr. Schulz** (Germany): It is again my pleasure to introduce this year's draft resolution entitled "The situation in Afghanistan" (A/74/L.13) to the General Assembly. As members of the Assembly know, this text was first adopted in 1980 and has been reintroduced every year since then. The annual resolutions have been mirroring the dynamics of the conflict and the

international community's continuing endeavour to help restore peace and stability and end the long suffering of the Afghan people. Since 2002, Germany has served as the facilitator of the draft resolution. During these years, we have been able to adapt the resolution to changing circumstances and to revise it to increase its effectiveness. That task has never been easy, but has always resulted in a demonstration of international consensus on Afghanistan.

This year has been no exception, even though the goal posts have continuously shifted. Afghanistan held presidential elections in late September and there were promising attempts to initiate a peace process. While those efforts suffered a setback, there are now ongoing attempts to reinvigorate the political process. The presidential elections in September were a crucial moment for the country's democratic transition — yet, even preliminary results are still not in and there is no clear date for their announcement. That has made it hard to put anything definitive into the draft resolution on those two issues.

Last year was the first on record in which a vote was called on the draft resolution (see A/73/PV.46). That showed that there were a few delegations that did not see eye to eye when it came to the often-cited situation on the ground, but in the end the result was resoundingly supportive.

Unfortunately, this year is no different. Consensus, at least in the negotiations, has remained elusive, but not for lack of trying. My expert held almost a dozen meetings in various formats, among them four in the plenary format with almost 60 delegations at the table for up to seven hours at a time. Those extensive consultations prepared us well for presenting the Assembly with a draft that reflects all the positions communicated to us to the maximum extent possible.

As the German representative did last year, I would like to remind everyone that this draft resolution remains first and foremost an important expression of support for Afghanistan and its people by the entire membership of the United Nations. I would like to thank all the delegations that have demonstrated great flexibility to maintain this unified show of support.

Turning to the substance of the draft resolution, our pre-eminent concern remains the fragile security situation in Afghanistan. In the past six months alone, we have seen a number of high-profile attacks. Just last Monday, an American United Nations aid worker was

killed in Kabul, and I want to convey my condolences to the victim's family and loved ones. Furthermore, the number of civilians killed in Afghanistan is at an all-time high. The situation simply cannot go on like that. The country desperately needs peace.

We also pay tribute to the patriotism and sacrifices of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Together with our international partners, Germany will continue to support them through NATO's Resolute Support Mission in their efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. But that support is viable only if matched by and linked to continued support for civilian development and stabilization, as well as diplomatic efforts aimed at a political solution. An inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process involving all parts of Afghan society, including the Taliban, is the only path towards a sustainable resolution of the conflict. Despite the recent setback, we need to continue on that path.

On behalf of the international community, this draft resolution reiterates the call on the parties to the conflict, in particular the Taliban, to recognize their responsibility to pursue peace and to enter into direct talks without preconditions. Just this past July, when Germany and Qatar jointly organized the intra-Afghan dialogue in Doha, we saw that it was possible to have direct and in-depth interactions with all parties involved. Most remarkably, 20 per cent of the participants were women — and they were key to making that meeting a success. We need to build on that and increase and strengthen the role of women in the peace process.

The support of Afghanistan's neighbours and the other countries of the region for the peace process is crucial to its success. Peace and stability in Afghanistan would benefit everyone and would lay the groundwork for much-needed regional cooperation and connectivity.

Afghanistan has come a long way. However, numerous challenges remain. Women's empowerment, good governance and the fight against corruption continue to be of crucial importance. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to continue its efforts in that regard and to implement the announced political and economic reforms. We also encourage all sides involved to speed up the process that will lead to democratic transition in Afghanistan, thereby reassuring the voters that they made the right decision when they risked their lives in casting their ballots in September's election.

Germany remains deeply committed to supporting Afghanistan, in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and our international partners. Germany also remains deeply committed to acting as a facilitator on this important draft resolution, which merits the support of all of our countries.

Lastly, Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

**Mrs. Raz** (Afghanistan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting as we adopt this year's draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/74/L.13).

Allow me to express my gratitude to the German Mission as a long-time facilitator of this very important draft resolution for Afghanistan. I thank in particular Ambassador Christoph Heusgen and his team, and especially Mr. Friedrich Schroeder, for their leadership and able facilitation. Germany is one of the long-standing supporters of the Afghan people and a genuine partner and ally in the efforts to ensure peace, security and prosperity in Afghanistan. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the representatives of all Member States who participated in the discussion, showed flexibility and supported the draft resolution through active contribution — especially those States that are sponsoring it today.

As we adopt this annual draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, let me speak about some major political, security and socioeconomic developments that have occurred since the adoption of last year's resolution 73/88. Those include the holding of the presidential and parliamentary elections and the pursuit of peace and reconciliation efforts in the implementation of the reform agenda to achieve self-reliance.

With regard to the elections, against the backdrop of serious security threats, the parliamentary elections were held on 20 October 2018, when 4.6 million Afghans voted. About 60 per cent of the new members of the new Parliament, which was inaugurated on 26 April 2019, are under the age of 40 and about 25 to 28 per cent are women. That was yet another important step in strengthening and sustaining democracy in Afghanistan. Through their votes, the people of Afghanistan proved once again that no threat can ever affect their strong will for consensus and that the essence of democracy is the cornerstone of the new Afghanistan.

Following the parliamentary elections on 28 September, we held our fourth presidential elections. Despite the threat of violence, attacks and, in some cases, even having their fingers cut off by the Taliban, people still came out to vote. For Afghans, that was not simply a vote to elect a future President, but rather a vote for democracy and a vote for the Republic. People voted to defend the Constitution and the sovereignty of the State, as well as for the prosperity and stability of Afghanistan. The vote gave the power to 2 million Afghans to say no to terrorism and yes to peace.

The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces participated in both elections with the utmost professionalism and bravery as they protected the constitutional right of every Afghan to vote. About 70,00 of our courageous soldiers safeguarded our people during that historical moment, and due to their effective measures and competence most attacks were averted. For the majority of us here in the Hall, elections and voting are assumed rights and those who exercise them are simply performing their civic duty. For Afghans, it is beyond a civic duty — it is our civic power, which we can exercise equally to define the destiny of the new Afghanistan.

I would now like to pause to congratulate our friends and allies, particularly the NATO member countries that have stood by us over the past 18 years as we pursued our journey to rebuild the new Afghanistan. All of them have invested their blood and treasure in the pursuit of democracy and stability in Afghanistan, and there should now be no doubt about our commitment to those values and principles.

Peace is an important priority for the people in Government of Afghanistan. It was in February 2018 that President Ghani first called for unconditional peace talks with the Taliban. In June, following that unconditional offer of peace talks, we had a three-day ceasefire, which helped us to understand our society's capacity to absorb the 20,000 Taliban members who came to our big cities during the celebration of the three-day Eid holiday. That helped us to understand that achieving peace and ending conflict is possible.

As we know, the success of every peace deal lies in its sustainability and duration, and it can happen only if the public is involved, engaged and consulted. The Government needed to carry out nationwide consultations in order to identify the framework for negotiations and, to that end, took the important step of

organizing the consultative peace loya jirga. In April, 3,200 representatives from all parts of the country participated in the jirga to highlight their mandate for peace. The five-day consultative peace jirga, in which 30 per cent of the delegates were women, adopted a national road map and a mandate for peace. That road map was decisive in its parameters, which called for, among others, an immediate ceasefire, sustainable peace, direct talks with the Government, and the preservation of human rights, particularly women's rights. The constitutional rights of women are an important feature of the new Afghanistan. As the Secretary-General has said, the preservation and protection of women's rights is not only the good thing to do, but the right thing to do for an effective, meaningful and lasting peace.

The Government of Afghanistan welcomes all regional and international peace efforts that align with an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and help to facilitate direct talks with the Taliban. In line with international norms, we firmly believe in the principles of respecting sovereignty and State-to-State relations and hold those values as central to the success of our peace efforts. We would like to thank our friends and allies, including the United States, the European Union, Germany, Norway, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Uzbekistan, among others, which have supported our work to achieve a dignified and sustainable peace.

With regard to the security situation, the Taliban and other transnational terrorist groups have relentlessly and violently continued creating terror and fear. Our national security and defence forces have proved their ability to successfully defend our country in the most courageous way, reversing many attacks and protecting our people. In fact, the Afghan soldiers fighting today are eliminating the threat posed to all of us globally. As we have said before, terrorism does not recognize boundaries or borders and it threatens the lives of everyone, everywhere.

As a result of the growing strength of our security forces, the Taliban and terrorist groups have resorted to cowardly and deadly attacks on civilian targets and have caused this year's record-high numbers of civilian casualties, a third of which have been women and children. Targeting civilians and public institutions, including hospitals and clinics, and using individuals as human shields are violations of international law

and go against all moral values. Those acts need to be stopped immediately by the Taliban.

Among the persistent challenges that continue to threaten the peace and security of Afghanistan are terrorism and the presence of regional and transnational terrorist groups, including the Taliban, as well as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaida affiliates. Recently, the Government of Afghanistan carried out an intensive and successful operation in Nangarhar to eliminate ISIL strongholds. The past 18 years of conflict imposed by terrorist groups and the Taliban have not resulted only in the loss of innocent lives and instability in my country, but have also deeply impacted our joint efforts for achieving social and economic development.

Nevertheless, the Afghan Government has undertaken to implement and realize the reform agenda according to the commitments made in the Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework and the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework. As we work towards fully implementing this agenda, we are making tremendous progress in our regional economic cooperation agenda. The Afghan Government welcomes all initiatives that bolster our regional economic connectivity and help Afghanistan connect to the region and beyond.

Terrorism is not the only threat that the people of Afghanistan face. The effects of climate change, leading to severe humanitarian crises, are another critical challenge we are facing. Afghanistan is a predominantly agricultural economy; the prolonged drought had destructive effects on the life and well-being of our society, driving many families to leave their homes and provinces in search of better alternatives. That led to a highly critical humanitarian situation that requires an immediate response. However, I do need to highlight the leadership role that the United Nations has taken in coordinating with the international community to facilitate the necessary response as soon as possible.

The threats of illicit drug cultivation, production and trafficking pose another security challenge to Afghanistan. The Afghan people were the primary victims of this menace and continue to pay the highest price. There is also a direct link between narcotics and sources of funding for the Taliban. In that regard, the Government of Afghanistan has been a committed partner and ally in fighting to eradicate and dismantle this threat. However, this is not a single-country issue.

We need a regionally comprehensive, collaborative effort and strategy to counter the narcotics trade and market. We need an inclusive approach involving all regional and international stakeholders to combat the root causes of the problem, including the trafficking of precursors, financial safe havens and demand reduction.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly and his Government for their sustained support in assisting the Afghan Government and people in our efforts to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan. We should look to the future of Afghanistan from our perspective, which is more forward-looking and optimistic. For some, 18 years may seem a long time to rebuild the country from its state of ruin and complete destruction. But for me, who still remembers the dark days of the Taliban and the absence of hope when the regime locked all of us in complete isolation and contact from the outside world, today is the brightest and most fortunate future I could ever have dreamed of.

Thanks to the tremendous support we have received, we have come a long way and we have made great progress. Today, the support of the Assembly and the draft resolution represent another important step in sending a strong message of solidarity to Afghans, as well as those that still aim to turn Afghanistan into a safe haven for terrorist groups. The voices of Member States in in this Hall will matter to people in Afghanistan, letting them know that they are not alone and that, in both our fight against terrorism and our quest for peace, we all stand together.

**Mr. Yardley** (Australia): The Australian Government congratulates the people of Afghanistan on their courage and determination in participating in presidential elections on 28 September. We commend the Afghan people for exercising their democratic right in difficult circumstances. We await the results of the election and encourage all stakeholders to respect due process during the period of tallying votes and reviewing complaints.

The Australian Government acknowledges the commitment of the Afghan Government and the bravery of the Afghan security forces in promoting security, combating terrorism and working to create the conditions necessary for a peaceful end to the longstanding conflict in Afghanistan. Afghans are ready for peace and security, which are preconditions for Afghanistan's development. There is no military

solution to the conflict. Dialogue and negotiation are the only path to a permanent settlement. We welcome the important steps that the Government of Afghanistan and the United States have taken towards ending the conflict, including recent confidence-building measures. We encourage our partners to support these steps towards a peace that can set the stage for post-peace economic development.

We condemn the Taliban's ongoing use of violence. We are disappointed that the Taliban continues to resist direct talks with the Afghan Government. We do not believe that a sustainable political settlement is viable without such talks and call on the Taliban to reduce violence immediately and begin discussions without preconditions.

While we welcome efforts made towards peace, we must not forget the millions of Afghans who continue to struggle in the face of a protracted humanitarian crisis. The links between conflict, humanitarian need and ongoing development are complex. International partners need to coordinate closely and draw on our collective experience to support Afghanistan through a successful transition to peace. There are many challenges, including corruption, that diminish the extent to which the Afghan people are able to benefit from peace and development.

Australia calls on international partners to recognize Afghan women's achievements, their gains and their particular struggles in the ongoing conflict. Afghan women have the right to a strong voice in the ongoing dialogue on peace and development. Indeed, a peace process cannot be successful without their full involvement. We call on international partners to mobilize diplomatic and development resources to support Afghan women.

We appreciate the valuable contribution of all United Nations agencies, diplomatic partners and their staff in supporting Afghanistan to meet its people's needs. Australia calls on the international community to cooperate in continued efforts to support the people of Afghanistan.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Dabouis** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 28 member States. Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia

and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for her statement and I also thank all delegations that participated in the consultations on the draft resolution (A/74/L.13), particularly the German team, for facilitating the negotiations. We look forward to its swift adoption by consensus once again.

Before I start my statement, let me underline the EU's condemnation of the cowardly terrorist attack against a United Nations-marked vehicle that killed an American citizen and wounded two others, who were all working to help and protect the Afghan people.

The EU is very aware of the crucial role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and United Nations agencies in supporting the Afghan people by encouraging peace and reconciliation, monitoring and promoting human rights and implementing the commitments from the November 2018 ministerial conference on Afghanistan. In a spirit of cooperation, we strive to maintain the closest possible relationship with UNAMA on the ground and in international forums for the ultimate benefit of Afghanistan and its citizens.

The suspension of bilateral talks between the United States and the Taliban in September led to the suspension of the peace process and the postponement of the next phase, the intra-Afghan negotiations between the Government and the Taliban, which were due to start later that month. The current pause, however, is being used to prepare the launch of a genuine peace process that could and should be accompanied by a ceasefire. On 9 November Federica Mogherini, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs, and the Foreign Ministers of the European Union member States discussed Afghanistan and recalled the following principles framing the EU's engagement in Afghanistan in the current phase.

First, direct intra-Afghan talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban remain the only way to reach lasting peace in the country. The conflict needs a political settlement. The EU supports a resumption of talks between the United States and the Taliban as a step towards the launch of a genuine intra-Afghan peace process, with direct negotiations between the Government and the Taliban. The intra-Afghan negotiations must take place in an

environment conducive to reaching a balanced peace agreement that respects the constitutional order and fundamental values of Afghanistan.

Secondly, the EU believes that the start of these intra-Afghan negotiations should be accompanied by a ceasefire. Until then, between now and the start of the intra-Afghan talks, there should be a significant reduction in violence, as a concrete step towards peace that will also halt unnecessary suffering and facilitate the forthcoming peace process. Afghan citizens are longing for peace. It is important that all sides seize this historic opportunity, for too many opportunities have been missed over the past 18 years.

Thirdly, while the international community can play a supportive role, it must always respect the principle of an Afghan-owned and -led peace process, respecting the independence, integrity and sovereignty of the Afghan State.

Fourthly and finally, as the European Union has repeatedly stated, the peace process must consolidate rather than erode the achievements of the past 18 years, including improvements related to the rights of women, children and minorities. Particular attention should be given to the full involvement of women in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the protection of their constitutional rights, and the preservation of Afghanistan's rights and democratic advances. The EU is ready to support an inclusive political process.

As High Representative Mogherini stated at the Geneva ministerial conference a year ago, the European Union stands ready to contribute politically and financially at every stage of the process to the future of Afghanistan, post-conflict reforms, and the implementation of a peace settlement that embodies those principles. The EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan is working hard, together with the special envoys and representatives of the EU member States, and in close cooperation with the United States Special Representative for Afghanistan, to make this peace settlement a reality.

When it comes to elections, the EU strongly believes that the pursuit of peace must not come at the expense of Afghanistan's fundamental values and democratic development. Elections and peace go hand in hand. The presidential elections that took place on 28 September demonstrated once again the determination of Afghan citizens to support the democratic development of their country, even if casting

their votes means risking their lives. The legitimacy of the election results will be linked to the ability of the Afghan electoral management bodies to fulfil their mandate impartially, efficiently and transparently and with full respect for the Constitution and electoral laws and procedures, including the correct management of complaints and appeals proceedings. We trust that the preliminary and final election results will be released without much further delay. The European Union expects all candidates to exercise restraint and take a constructive attitude to the Independent Electoral Commission. The European Union supported both the 2018 parliamentary and the 2019 presidential elections with a total contribution of €30 million through the United Nations-implemented Electoral Support Project and grants to civil society. We deployed a small election expert team on both occasions.

On development, the European Union stands ready to continue its long-term commitment to Afghanistan after the signing of a peace agreement. The EU welcomes all opportunities to provide substantial financial, political, diplomatic and development support as required at all stages of the peace process, including after the successful conclusion of a peace agreement. As the process continues towards a political settlement, coordination between development, security and political actors is crucial. The European Union is continuing its close cooperation with key international partners. In that regard, we reiterate our support to the efforts of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission to provide training, advice and assistance for Afghanistan's security forces and institutions.

The European Union and its member States will continue to be strong development partners for Afghanistan. We are currently beginning preparations for our next programming cycle for Afghanistan, for the period from 2021 to 2027. It is our belief that all donors should already seriously reflect on the many peace dividends that will be available to all Afghans if the parties to the conflict eventually reach an agreement on lasting peace. That will require shared analysis and a vision for development, a sustained and demonstrable commitment to poverty reduction, a renewed commitment at the highest level to tackling corruption, and a conducive and enabling environment for all development actors.

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the high level of civilian casualties and the increasing numbers of displaced people in Afghanistan,

and emphasizes the importance of protecting the civilian population, especially women and children. The European Union supports the economic empowerment of Afghan women. In addition, the European Commission has reinforced humanitarian support with €40 million in aid to the most vulnerable families in Afghanistan, as well as for Afghan refugees in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran.

In conclusion, this is a crucial moment for Afghanistan's future. The European Union firmly believes that any final peace agreement to end the Afghan conflict will be viable and accepted by the various layers of Afghanistan's population only if it supports and maintains the values and achievements of the past two decades — in other words, if the process and ensuing agreement project Afghanistan into the future and build on its evolution in the twenty-first century. The democratization of Afghanistan should continue, along with improved protection of the rights of all Afghans and efforts to safeguard the country's democratic institutions. For peace to endure in Afghanistan, it will need the full support of all States involved. The EU has played its part and remains ready to carry on working to support Afghanistan.

**Mr. Alshamsi** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. We would also like to thank Germany for its efforts in facilitating the consultations on this year's draft of the annual resolution on Afghanistan (A/74/L.13), which reflects the continuing international efforts to help restore peace and stability in the country and put an end to the protracted suffering of the Afghan people. We are also honoured to be among the more than 60 sponsors of the draft resolution.

Almost three years have passed since Juma Alkaabi, our Ambassador to Afghanistan, together with five Emirati humanitarian aid officials, was killed in a terrorist explosion in Kandahar in January 2017 while working on humanitarian, education and development projects in Afghanistan that included the signing of an agreement with a university in Kabul to provide scholarships funded by the United Arab Emirates. Notwithstanding that tragedy, the United Arab Emirates has continued its efforts to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan by participating in the work of NATO there and hosting intra-Afghan reconciliation talks in Abu Dhabi in December 2018.

My country supports every effort of the international community to provide consolidated and coordinated support to the inclusive peace process in Afghanistan, in the belief that diplomatic solutions are the only path towards long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We would like also to express our deep concern about the continuing terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, which claimed more than 8,200 lives during the first nine months of 2019, while July was the bloodiest month of all. In that context, I reiterate that the United Arab Emirates maintains a very strict position regarding all forms of extremism and terrorism. We renounce any kind of violence, which causes instability and is against our humanitarian and religious principles.

We are committed to helping Afghan people realize their vision of peace, stability and prosperity in all areas. We have provided Afghanistan with development and humanitarian assistance amounting to more than \$215 million since 2014. Given the importance of increasing the number of women in peacekeeping processes, in early 2019, in collaboration with UN-Women, the United Arab Emirates launched a military and peacekeeping training programme for Arab women with the participation of 134 trainees from the Arab region. The second stage of this training programme will be launched in January 2020, and it will be expanded to include trainees from Afghanistan and other countries of Asia and Africa. The United Arab Emirates is pleased to have joined the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, through which we are seeking to strengthen partnerships with civil society and the private sector to bolster efforts to address the challenges facing women in Afghanistan.

In every international and regional forum, in keeping with our policy of ensuring respect for the human rights of nationals of States experiencing wars or disasters, the United Arab Emirates continues to urge States that are hosting Afghan nationals on their territories to refrain from using them in other regional conflicts or issues that they have nothing to do with, in violation of international law, and to respect refugees' rights and provide them with minimally decent standards of living.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates will uphold its humanitarian obligations towards the Afghan people and continue to provide humanitarian support and development assistance through both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We call on the international

community to come together to defeat the violence and extremism that threaten the security and stability of the region and the world.

**Ms. Zahir** (Maldives): The Maldives welcomes the progress that Afghanistan is making in peace and development. The people of Afghanistan have shown extraordinary resilience and determination in reforming their nation despite a volatile environment. The people of the Maldives support and share with the people of Afghanistan the vision of a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Afghanistan has made considerable progress in improving its investment environment. It has risen from 183rd to 167th place in the World Bank's business rankings, which signals increased self-reliance. The economic growth and integration in the region are contributing to that economic progress and to the welfare of the people of Afghanistan. That regional integration would benefit from regional partnerships, including with members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The Maldives supports and encourages Afghanistan in strengthening its regional economic engagement.

The Government of Afghanistan has also shown great leadership and courage in promoting democratic values in the country. In the recent elections, the Afghan people showed that they have chosen the path of peace and of tolerance over extremism and cooperation over confrontation. We understand that in the country's journey towards an Afghan-led and -owned peace process, more steps must be taken to consolidate and further its democratic gains. We look forward to seeing constructive engagement in all aspects of the electoral process by all stakeholders, including candidates, political parties and civil-society organizations.

Afghanistan is making remarkable progress in promoting human rights values, especially for women and young girls. The establishment of a technical committee to review the 2009 law on eliminating violence against women is an encouraging step, as is the increasing participation of women in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and conflict prevention for sustaining peace in the country. As Afghanistan approaches the halfway point in its transformation decade, the Maldives would like to acknowledge the Government's achievements in key elements of this agenda, including finalizing 10 national priority

programmes, implementing far-reaching fiscal reforms and promoting women's participation in public life.

The Maldives condemns and is deeply concerned about the Taliban's continued attacks, and we express our heartfelt sympathy to the people and the Government of Afghanistan for their losses. This year's significant rise in the numbers of civilian casualties of terrorist attacks, and the high and rising cost of the conflict in civilian lives generally, is a stark reminder that ending the conflict through peace negotiations must remain the top priority guiding all efforts in Afghanistan. We call on the United Nations and its Member States to support Afghanistan in rebuilding the country. To that end, we call on all parties to respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We also call on all anti-government elements to cease their attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

A stable, safe, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan would not only benefit its people but would be in the interests of the whole region, its economic partners and the global community. The Maldives therefore calls once again on the United Nations and its Member States to support Afghanistan on its journey to achieving peace, development and self-reliance.

**Mr. Sinirlioglu** (Turkey): We are pleased that the negotiations led by Germany on draft resolution A/74/L.13, on the situation in Afghanistan, were successfully completed. We thank all the delegations that made genuine efforts to that end. We are pleased to be among its sponsors and look forward to its adoption by consensus. As in previous years, the draft resolution underscores the progress achieved in Afghanistan and also constitutes a solid manifestation of the international community's unanimous support to the people and the Government of Afghanistan in addressing the challenges facing the country.

On 28 September, presidential elections took place in Afghanistan for the fourth time since 2001. We commend all the effort put into the election process amid the many technical challenges and security threats. We are pleased that despite some incidents, the elections were held in a relatively secure atmosphere. Although the results have yet to be officially announced, the entire process once again demonstrated the Afghan people's commitment to democracy. Following the conclusion of the electoral process, efforts for the peace process will have to be redoubled. We are glad that

the drive to achieve peace has gained momentum in recent months. That is a welcome development in itself. Turkey supports all initiatives that could help to end the violence. However, they should be closely coordinated and complementary. We hope that the necessary lessons will be drawn from previous talks. We should be careful not to grant the Taliban premature legitimacy.

At this critical juncture of political, security and economic transformation in Afghanistan, the importance of regional cooperation and commitment becomes all the more relevant for steering the region into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity. The region has frequently demonstrated its readiness to resolve its own problems and transform common problems into areas of mutual benefit, and we welcome all bilateral and multilateral dialogue and cooperation efforts to that end. We consider the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan a significant platform for strengthening our cooperation for political dialogue and consultation. Launched in Istanbul back in 2011, the Process remains instrumental for addressing current challenges in a spirit of responsibility, solidarity and ownership. Throughout the year, meetings of senior officials and other gatherings have enabled us to exchange views and concerns on regional matters in a transparent manner. Our experience in the Process has shown that focusing on our common interests helps this unique forum for cooperation to reach its full potential. We therefore believe that the Process could be better used in that regard. One immediate objective could be to utilize it as a platform for facilitating peace efforts as well as post-peace initiatives. The forthcoming ministerial conference to be held on 9 December in Istanbul will certainly be an important opportunity for substantial discussion of these matters.

The Afghan people, and especially Afghan women, cannot sacrifice the achievements they have made at great cost over the past 18 years. Of the 8 million students enrolled in Afghan schools, 2.5 million are girls. Ensuring women's participation in election and peace negotiations and their overall engagement in governance and Government will help preserve the gains we have made to date. All our efforts to empower girls and women should not be wasted. The Afghan people deserve a better future. It is our joint responsibility to help them reach that goal, and Turkey will spare no effort to that end.

**Mrs. Zappia** (Italy): Italy welcomes the opportunity to participate in the annual General Assembly debate on Afghanistan. At the outset, we would like to reiterate our full support for the draft resolution to be adopted (A/74/L.13).

We also align ourselves with the statement by the observer of the European Union.

Italy remains committed to the enduring partnership between the international community and Afghanistan. Together, we will persevere in our common efforts to create an environment that enables the Afghan people to look towards a future of peace, economic prosperity and self-reliance. That partnership is essential precisely because Afghanistan continues to face daunting challenges, first and foremost in the security arena. The cycle of violence has continued to exact a terrible toll on civilians, and especially on the most vulnerable segments of the Afghan population, such as women and children. As a framework nation of the Resolute Support Mission, Italy continues to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, and we honour their bravery and sacrifices on the battlefield.

The best path to lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan today continues to be a negotiated solution through an Afghan-led and -owned reconciliation process. Intra-Afghan negotiations must begin as soon as possible and should ensure the full buy-in of all layers of Afghan society. Italy strongly supports the ongoing engagement of international stakeholders in promoting the revitalization of the peace process. We hope that the window of opportunity for peace that has been pursued so resolutely and tenaciously in recent months will remain open. We must also maintain a strategic approach, recognizing that sustainable peace is a long-term project. The process should be as inclusive as possible, with a primary and meaningful role for Afghan women at the negotiating table, which will be essential if we are to ensure that their constitutional rights and hard-won civil and social gains are fully safeguarded.

We welcomed the holding of the Afghan-led presidential elections in September, in spite of the insurgency's attempts to disrupt the process, which we condemn. The credibility and transparency of the electoral process must also be maintained during the final tabulation of the votes. We hope the definitive results will be announced as soon as possible.

Italy welcomes the partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community for

advancing wide-ranging, meaningful reforms. We look forward to the next international pledging conference in 2020, which will be an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made and to reaffirm our mutual commitment to fostering a future of peace, prosperity and sustainable development. In this context, it remains imperative to strengthen measures to fight corruption, which will build people's confidence in the country's institutions and have a positive impact on private-sector development, a key element for a more open and productive society.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Italy's full support to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the key role it plays in the framework of the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): The situation in Afghanistan remains a source of grave concern for the international community. Persistent conflict, instability and turmoil, and a fragile economy, continue to exacerbate the suffering of the Afghan people.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan, I would like to begin by condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attack on the United Nations vehicle in Kabul on 24 November, which resulted in the sad death of one United Nations official and injuries to two others. We join the Secretary-General in calling for the perpetrators of this heinous crime to be brought to justice as soon as possible.

Pakistan enjoys a close and symbiotic relationship with the people of Afghanistan, anchored in geography, history, shared ethnicity and a common faith. Peace in Afghanistan will enable both nations to serve as a bridge for trade and commerce between Central Asia, South Asia and beyond. The success of the efforts to achieve peace and prosperity in Afghanistan is therefore vital for us. Apart from Afghanistan itself, no country has suffered more than Pakistan from the four decades of war and foreign interventions in Afghanistan. We have lost more than 80,000 civilians and soldiers in the war on terror. No other country has therefore more to gain from peace in Afghanistan.

Our Prime Minister, Imran Khan, has been opposed to foreign intervention in Afghanistan from the outset. Pakistan has consistently maintained that there can be no military solution to the conflict in that country. Peace can be restored only through a negotiated political settlement involving the full spectrum of the

Afghan political class. Pakistan therefore welcomes the international consensus around the need for a political settlement achieved through an inclusive, intra-Afghan process. In that context, Pakistan supports elections in Afghanistan in accordance with the aspirations of its people. Pakistan has done whatever it could in the past year to contribute to the objective of a political settlement. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's support for peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan in his very first address to the nation after his election, and responded to United States President Donald Trump's request last year to assist in the commencement of talks between the United States and the Taliban. Our contribution to the launch of direct United States-Taliban talks in Doha, after an initial round in the United Arab Emirates, is well known.

Pakistan released the Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar at the request of the United States. Throughout the several rounds of United States-Taliban talks, we have liaised closely with the dialogue process and have fully supported those efforts with our endorsement at the highest levels. After the process broke down, in October Pakistan hosted a delegation of the Taliban Political Commission that travelled from Doha, and we facilitated contacts enabling the stalled negotiations to resume. Most recently, Pakistan played a crucial role in obtaining the release of a United States and an Australian national from captivity. We appreciated President Trump's call to the Prime Minister to thank him for facilitating that release.

Those efforts have led to a resumption of direct talks between the United States and the Taliban in Doha, and we hope they will soon lead to an agreement between them, which in turn should enable an intra-Afghan dialogue that brings all Afghan parties to the table. Such a dialogue can secure a political settlement and sustainable peace if all the parties display flexibility and mutual accommodation, and should also ensure that no terrorist groups operate out of Afghanistan. The support of the major powers and States of the region will be essential to the intra-Afghan process and to the achievement of sustained peace and security in and around Afghanistan. The joint efforts by the United States, China, Russia and Pakistan have made a positive contribution to the ongoing dialogue and will continue to be relevant in the next stage of the intra-Afghan dialogue. At the regional level, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan hosted a third round of the trilateral Foreign Ministers dialogue in Islamabad in August.

Pakistan has consistently worked to improve and enhance its relations with Afghanistan. During President Ghani's visit to Pakistan in June, the two countries agreed to adopt a forward-looking approach and to move away from the difficulties of the past. We continue to work closely with Afghanistan to expand our trade and economic relations and cooperation for regional connectivity under the umbrella of the Afghan-Pakistan action plan for peace and solidarity. The opening of the Torkham crossing to commercial traffic on a 24/7 basis and the opening of our airspace have added another tangible dimension to closer cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan has provided significant development assistance to Afghanistan in the education, health, reconstruction and infrastructure sectors. The Jinnah Hospital in Kabul, a gift from Pakistan to the people of Afghanistan, was recently handed over to the Afghan authorities. Another 100-bed hospital in Lowgar Province is nearing completion.

Peace in Afghanistan will open the door to economic cooperation and investment, including projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan economic corridor. We are working with Afghanistan and other regional partners on several other regional economic and energy projects, such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline, the CASA-1000 Central Asia-South Asia power project and others.

Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees for four decades. It is the largest prolonged refugee presence anywhere in the world. My Government has extended the tripartite agreement and the validity of the stay of Afghan refugees in Pakistan until 30 June 2020. We remain committed to their safe, dignified, voluntary and early repatriation.

Securing the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and preventing terrorist attacks from across the border are essential, and that can be achieved only through constant vigilance, effective management and real-time communication. Terrorists should not be allowed to provoke clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan border security forces. We need regular contact between the two countries' armed forces and intelligence agencies in order to prevent violent incidents along the border. To that end, the armed forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to post liaison officers at each other's army headquarters and to establish ground coordination centres.

The success of those initiatives requires reciprocity, trust and good will. We hope the Afghan Government will work constructively with us to address the challenges that endanger our collective security and stability. Eighty years ago, in the aftermath of Britain's wars in Afghanistan, Allama Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet, said,

“The continent of Asia is like a body made of clay and water, and Afghanistan lies like a heart in that body. In case of peace in Afghanistan, there will be tranquillity in the whole of Asia. But if there is chaos in Afghanistan, there will be disorder in the whole of Asia.”

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Peace and stability in Afghanistan relate to the vital interests of the Afghan people and are crucial to regional security, stability, development and prosperity. The current situation in Afghanistan is at a critical stage, with the election results yet to be announced. The peace and reconciliation process has seen growing uncertainties, the security situation is disconcerting and the humanitarian situation remains grim. The international community should provide continuous support and assistance to Afghanistan.

China supports advancing an inclusive political process in line with the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned principle. Recently, the international community and countries of the region have been actively promoting direct talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, which has lent positive impetus to the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. We call upon the United States and the Taliban to continue negotiations and call upon all Afghan parties, including the Taliban, to prioritize the interests of their country and their people, seize the historic opportunity presented and begin intra-Afghan talks with a view to reaching a future political framework that is acceptable to all.

Having consistently supported the Afghan reconciliation process, China will continue to use such mechanisms as the Afghanistan Contact Group of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, the China-Russia-United States trilateral consultation on the Afghan issue and other channels to promote peace talks and help the Afghan people achieve an inclusive reconciliation. China supports the relevant Afghan authorities in properly handling post-electoral activities so as to achieve a stable transition of power.

While the results of the presidential elections are pending, China appreciates the work and efforts the Afghan Government has undertaken with respect to the elections. In order to safeguard the political stability and social tranquillity of the country, China trusts that the Afghan election authorities will release the results of the election as soon as possible. China also hopes that the country's national security forces will make a predeployment in anticipation of possible security issues following the announcement of the results. We call upon all upon all Afghan political parties to strengthen unity and resolve electoral differences through dialogue. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan needs to provide assistance to Afghanistan in this regard.

China supports Afghanistan in enhancing its security capabilities. The security situation in the country remains fragile, with air strikes and search operations resulting in a considerable increase in civilian deaths. Terrorist groups — mainly funded through drugs — are still active. We condemn the recent attack on the United Nations vehicle in Kabul.

China calls for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan in an orderly and responsible manner. We call upon the United States and the Taliban to deliver on their commitments to troop withdrawal and counter-terrorism.

The international community should provide training, funding and technical support to Afghanistan's national security forces for capacity-building efforts. Doing so will assist the country in its fight against terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking and other threats. China is working through bilateral channels to assist Afghanistan in bolstering its counter-terrorism capabilities. We are helping to support the country's counter-terrorism efforts through the SCO and the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism in Counter-Terrorism comprising the armed forces of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

China supports Afghanistan in advancing its socioeconomic development and substantially improving people's lives. Given the recent economic stagnation of the country, its desire to boost people's livelihoods is strong and urgent. The international community should continue to closely follow the situation in the country and offer its strong support to the Government and the people of Afghanistan so as to improve the humanitarian situation and foster

growth. It is important to help Afghanistan engage in regional economic cooperation and connectivity by using its own strengths, thereby enabling the country to eradicate poverty, overcome challenges brought about by natural disasters and achieve stability and prosperity at an early date.

China is working with the Afghanistan to actively promote cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative through the continued implementation of their memorandum of understanding. We are aiming to promote Afghanistan's regional trade, infrastructure, construction, connectivity and socioeconomic development. We hope that all countries, in the spirit of wide consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits, will strengthen and scale up regional economic cooperation, forge connectivity and partnerships and promote regional peace and stability through development. By helping Afghanistan integrate into regional development dynamics, we will together build a community of shared future for humankind.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since the General Assembly's meeting on Afghanistan in December 2018 (see A/73/PV.46), significant changes have taken place in the country — some promising and some with menacing consequences.

The holding of presidential elections in Afghanistan was indeed a success and constituted a positive first step in the right direction as elections can further promote the rule of law and the democratic foundations of the country. Now every effort must be made to settle the existing differences in the lead-up to the announcement of the election results so as to enable the new Administration to commence its work. This is crucial for peace, stability and prosperity in the country.

Following decades of insecurity and instability in their country, the people of Afghanistan are now calling for a genuine and durable peace, which, indeed, can be neither imported nor imposed. In order to be durable, peace in Afghanistan must be founded on the true aspirations and actual needs of Afghans and achieved through an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process involving all Afghan factions, including the Taliban. No other country has the right to decide Afghanistan's future; that right belongs exclusively to the Afghans themselves. Accordingly, the Government of Afghanistan must play a central role in any peace effort. Any exclusionary, unilateral or non-transparent peace talks, particularly in the absence of Afghanistan's

Government and its neighbouring countries, has little chance of success, if it does not result in complete failure. Moreover, any peace effort must be based on preserving and promoting the previous achievements of the Government and the people of Afghanistan, particularly the Constitution and the Islamic Republic system, as well as other institutions derived therefrom.

At the same time, in the case of an agreement to amend the Constitution, the process must be conducted in line with the procedure foreseen therein and under the supervision of the legitimate Government of Afghanistan. Ultimately, any amendment must take into account the underlying causes of the conflict, particularly the presence of foreign forces. Our genuine effort behind the annual General Assembly draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/74/L.13) must not be construed as any acknowledgment of or support for the continued presence or activities of foreign forces in the country, and we reiterate our strong call for a time-bound and responsible withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan, regardless of their mandate and instruction.

Prior to and during the withdrawal of foreign forces, every effort should be made to support and strengthen Afghanistan's military and security forces as a high priority. This is particularly essential for combating terrorist groups such as Da'esh, whose introduction to Afghanistan has led to increased bloodshed and dangerous sectarian tendencies. Although counter-terrorism efforts remain the responsibility of the Afghan Government and the foreign forces present in the country, Iran stands ready to support those efforts, particularly given its unique and extensive experience in helping the Governments and peoples of Iraq and Syria in defeating Da'esh.

Iran also has valuable experience in combating drug trafficking, including when it is linked to terrorism. The fact that, in the past 40 years, 3,815 members of our law-enforcement forces have been martyred with over 12,000 others wounded indicates our seriousness in this endeavour. Our activities in combating drug traffickers have always been acknowledged at the global level. For instance, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's *World Drug Report 2019*, Iran had seized the largest quantity of opiates of any country in 2017, accounting for 39 per cent of the global total, as well as the largest quantity of opium and the second-largest quantities of morphine and heroin. We are determined to continue such efforts despite the

detrimental effects of the United States illegal unilateral sanctions undermining our capabilities in that regard.

That is not, however, the only impact of the United States sanctions. Unfortunately, the sanctions have serious negative consequences for the lives of the more than 3 million Afghan refugees in Iran, most of whom are now seriously contemplating migrating to other countries, including in Europe. The effects of United States sanctions on the fate of Afghan refugees should have been included in draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan to be adopted today, as it is expected to reflect all realities on the ground. While supporting draft resolution in the hope that it will contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan, we express our discomfort with the use of a particular term therein despite requests for its deletion.

Finally, in expressing its support for the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its resolve to continue supporting the fraternal people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

Indonesia is fully committed to helping Afghanistan succeed in line with the aspirations of all its people. While braving many challenges, Afghans have been resilient with regard to their homeland. The world saw their deep commitment once again during the presidential elections in September, when they expressed their will, while experiencing a precarious security situation. We hope that the election results will not undergo further delay.

We are confident that, with Afghans' strong will to build a collective national vision for a peaceful and democratic future, Afghanistan, sooner than later, will be bound to reclaim its rightful place in the world. But we, inside as well as outside the United Nations system, must also do our utmost to support its advancement. Indonesia, both as co-penholder with Germany of draft resolution A/74/L.13, on the issue of Afghanistan, and as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), as well as through its peacebuilding efforts in the country, is playing an active role. In that regard, Indonesia would like to reaffirm its full support for the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in effectively carrying out its mandate on the ground. We would also like to underline the following points with

regard to bringing about enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

First, concerning national reconciliation, democracy and women's role in the peace process, an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, underpinned by a comprehensive intra-Afghan dialogue, is of crucial importance. We concur with the emphasis that the Secretary-General places on "pursuing a negotiated settlement" in paragraph 60 of his report (A/74/348). All groups must abide by a democratic process, whereby they accept honouring the rights of all segments of society, including those of women and minorities. Women have made important gains in their representation in some Government and private organizations. There must not be any reversal, but only progress in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Indonesia is deeply committed to supporting Afghan women and enabling their robust participation in the Afghan peace process and nation-building.

In that regard, as we gather here today, Indonesia is hosting the Dialogue on the Role of Women in Building and Sustaining Peace: Women as Agents of Peace and Prosperity for Afghan Women from 27 to 30 November in Jakarta. The Dialogue provides different segments of Afghan and Indonesian women to share best practices and lessons to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Our Foreign Minister, Mrs. Retno Marsudi, continues to exert great personal effort in that area, including as an honorary member of the Group of Friends of Women of Afghanistan.

Secondly, security should improve. Even one casualty is one too many. Indonesia is deeply appalled by the high number of civilian deaths, including those caused by the most despicable attacks on children and humanitarian workers. We also condemn the attack on a United Nations vehicle in Kabul on 24 November, which claimed the life of a United Nations colleague and injured others. While Indonesia calls on the Afghan Government to use its capacities to protect the people, it also calls on anyone who has any influence on the insurgents and terrorists to end their attacks.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant also remains a serious threat. No effort must be spared to eradicate terrorist groups. Various reports of the Secretary-General mention parties whose actions have caused civilian casualties. Indonesia implores all

parties to not violate international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, with regard to effective State institutions, we hope that the Government's institutional reforms will only be boosted if a different set-up emerges in future. Well-functioning governance, accountability, justice, transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms also build the necessary ownership of the people within the Government's vision.

Fourthly, concerning broadly based socioeconomic development, the Government, with adequate support from the international community, needs to do more with regard to enabling the common people across the country to earn their livelihoods. Easing access for Afghan products and services to international markets is also important. The drought, together with the increase in displaced persons and natural disasters — not to mention last year's economic decline — placed additional strain on national capacities. The world must step up its support.

Afghanistan is blessed with precious natural resources and enterprising people. The success of the Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework and other mechanisms will ultimately be able to spur the transition to a sustainable and broad-based economy, if implemented effectively.

Let me conclude by reiterating Indonesia's full support for all measures that hasten Afghanistan's march towards the dawn of a new era of peace and prosperity. We must all contribute and stand united to enable Afghanistan to emerge from its challenges, rebuild and prosper peacefully.

**Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I express Egypt's appreciation for the convening of this meeting to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, given the positive developments that the country has experienced and the strategic importance of Afghanistan in Western Asia and its impact on security and stability in the Middle East.

Afghanistan has suffered for many years from wars and divisions. The most recent developments in the country offer a glimmer of hope to guide the country forward towards increased security and stability, especially with the adoption by the Afghan Government of an ambitious development plan for the period 2015-2024 to support Afghan State institutions. Egypt agrees with the international community on the importance of

supporting the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, of respecting its cultural diversity and of the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community through its support for the Afghan Government to achieve security, peace and stability in the country.

We call on all of Afghan parties to cooperate to achieve peace in Afghanistan through the peace process under way. We welcome the holding of the 2019 parliamentary and presidential elections as a positive step in the right direction towards the rebuilding of State institutions.

Egypt has always stood by the Afghan people by providing support to the Afghan Government in many fields, especially that of security. We have been conducting training courses and capacity-building in a number of areas, including counter-terrorism, human trafficking, illegal immigration, border protection and counter-narcotics and organized crime. We are also keen to contribute to inclusive development in Afghanistan through training courses in the fields of health, nursing, agriculture, irrigation, water and sanitation, and banking.

We are also cooperating with Afghanistan in the judicial sphere through the protocol signed between the Ministry of Justice in Egypt and the Supreme Court of Afghanistan to train Afghan judges on topics such as civil law. In addition, Al-Azhar University in Egypt is playing a paramount role by fighting radicalization and promoting moderate concepts of Islam by increasing the number of scholarships for Afghan students, in addition to the scholarships that are provided by the Egyptian Government to Afghan students in other Egyptian universities.

Egypt deems it crucial for the international community to continue its support for Afghanistan to build on the positive steps taken so far and to help the Afghan Government achieve greater success in future, until such time as the Afghan State has fully recovered following long decades of wars, instability and insecurity.

**Mrs. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America): The United States joins other Member States as a sponsor of draft resolution A/74/L.13, which is before us today. We remain deeply committed to Afghanistan's future. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Raz, for outlining Afghanistan's vision and her commitment to the values

we share. I wish also to commend Germany on the cooperative spirit in which it led this process.

My country seeks a durable and inclusive peace through a political settlement that will benefit all Afghan men and women. We seek a peace in Afghanistan in which Afghanistan plays its rightful and obligatory role contributing to international security and ensuring that its territory is no longer exploited by terrorists. We seek a peace that accelerates economic growth and prosperity for Afghanistan and its neighbours. We condemn the 24 November attack on a United Nations vehicle in Kabul, which killed a United States citizen. Attacks targeting United Nations personnel working to help the Afghan people are unconscionable, and we condemn this act in the strongest possible terms.

We have heard directly from the citizens of Afghanistan that they are ready for a peaceful and democratic future. To enable that peace, we call on the Taliban to immediately reduce the level of violence in order to create an environment conducive to negotiations, and we urge all sides to commit to a ceasefire during intra-Afghan negotiations.

We call on the Government of Afghanistan to appoint swiftly an inclusive national negotiating team that comprises representatives of the Government of Afghanistan, opposition political leaders and civil society, especially women, to negotiate a comprehensive and sustainable peace settlement with the Taliban.

For our part, the United States continues its support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process. Peace in Afghanistan is possible, and we must all seize this opportunity.

The United States would like to clarify that references in the draft resolution to climate change are without prejudice to United States positions.

In closing today, we reaffirm our commitment to the Afghan people and welcome the progress that has been made and the commitment to progress for the future.

**Mrs. Maitra** (India): I would like to begin by thanking all delegations that participated in the consultations on this year's draft resolution (A/74/L.13), in particular our German colleagues, for having so ably facilitated the negotiations. We also appreciate the thoughtful statement of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan outlining the recent developments in her country and articulating the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for her people.

My delegation attaches great importance to the consensual adoption of this draft, which is an important opportunity for the international community to express its solidarity for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

This year Afghanistan marked a century of independence. Fittingly, this year has been equally significant in terms of developments relating to peace efforts and the consolidation of the democratic process. We commend the people, the Government and the security forces of Afghanistan on the conduct of presidential elections on 28 September amid extremely challenging circumstances. The enthusiastic participation of the Afghan people, including women, in the process, despite threats, intimidation and violence, reflects their desire and faith in democratic governance and their rejection of the evil forces of terror and violence. Whatever may be the result of the elections, we hope that they contribute to the strengthening of an inclusive and democratic system in Afghanistan.

The draft resolution before us rightly emphasizes the importance of an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process. It also reiterates the importance of safeguarding the achievements of the last two decades. This is especially important for the gains made in pluralism, including civil liberties, women's rights and children's education.

We welcome the opportunities created by the various initiatives towards a formal peace process at the international, regional and domestic levels. While the international community must be united in supporting these efforts, we do not believe in advancing prescriptions. In any country, it is the people of that country and the elected representatives of that country who should have the leading voice in deciding their future; this has always been one of India's guiding principles in its engagement with Afghanistan.

We believe that only durable solution will be one that has constitutional legitimacy and a political mandate; that will ensure stability; and, most importantly, that will not leave ungoverned spaces for terrorists and their proxies to exploit.

Speaking from this rostrum in September this year, the Chair of Afghanistan's delegation to the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session said:

“Peace is our common objective, and terrorists are our common enemy. We must not rush the former,

at the risk of empowering the latter.” (A/74/PV.13, p.19)

According to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index, released just a few weeks ago, Afghanistan lost more lives to terrorism than any other country in 2018, with more than 7,000 deaths.

Of equal concern are the deepening linkages between organized crime, narcotics trafficking and terrorism financing. In that context, we welcome the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in fighting illicit drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan.

India has a long-standing historical, cultural and now economic, development and political relationship with Afghanistan. Our development partnership with Afghanistan has a focus on institutional capacity-building, health, education and the empowerment of women and youth, always keeping Afghan needs and priorities at the forefront.

Building reliable connectivity for landlocked Afghanistan is a key component of our regional partnership. In undertaking those endeavours, we are mindful that all such projects should respect State sovereignty and territorial integrity and be based on universally recognized norms, the principles of financial responsibility and ecological standards. It is in that spirit that we are engaged in various connectivity projects in the region, including the Chabahar port project and the direct India-Afghanistan air-freight corridor.

The courage and resilience of the Afghan people are a source of pride for our region. India remains committed to continuing its efforts to strengthen that spirit by supporting all initiatives designed to end violence and bring back peace. We urge the General Assembly to provide its full support to the Government of Afghanistan and to draft resolution A/74/L.13.

**Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the opportunity to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in the General Assembly this morning and to restate our full commitment to supporting the Government of Afghanistan and the crucial work of the United Nations in that country.

I want to begin, as many others have today, by extending our condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the United Nations staff member who died in an attack on a United Nations vehicle earlier this week. That heinous attack also caused many injuries to others. There is no justification for that or

any such attack. The United Nations work is vital to Afghanistan’s security, democracy and development. The United Nations is there to help Afghans, and its staff must be protected.

The United Kingdom is grateful to the German delegation for introducing draft resolution A/74/L.13, of which we are a co-sponsor. We support it and encourage all States to do so as well. We particularly welcome the draft resolution’s clear message highlighting the need for a political settlement to end the violence in Afghanistan. We also welcome the draft resolution’s strong endorsement of the importance of human rights. In particular, we welcome the emphasis on protecting and enhancing women’s rights and the role women can play in all spheres of Government and society in Afghanistan. It was to highlight that issue that the delegations of Afghanistan and United Kingdom launched the Group of Friends of Women of Afghanistan this past week, and we are grateful for the support and interest we have received from so many delegations and agencies.

Despite the able stewardship of negotiations by the German delegation, we note that negotiations were difficult and often focused on precedents from previous years or supposed “balance” between views. The United Kingdom believes that a shorter text would have more impact. We would like to propose, therefore, that we should all aim next year for a shorter text that focuses only on the key priorities. I would now like to make three particular points.

With regard to peace, we share the view of the Afghan Government that only a political process can deliver a just and lasting peace. A deal between the United States and the Taliban is crucial to unlocking intra-Afghan negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. We therefore hope that it will be possible to resume talks between the United States and the Taliban soon. But in order for that to be possible, it is clear that there will need to be a reduction in violence. That will help build confidence between the sides and an environment conducive to taking forward direct, inclusive talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban that aim to achieve a sustainable peace.

With regard to elections, the Presidential election in September demonstrated once again the resilience, tenacity and courage of the people of Afghanistan in exercising their democratic right to have a say in the

future of their country. However, nearly two months following that election, a preliminary result has still not been announced. We welcome the efforts made by the electoral management bodies to uphold the integrity of the process, including by handling complaints, and urge them to continue to work diligently in order to keep further delays to a minimum. We strongly encourage the election management bodies to communicate progress and the decisions they have taken clearly and in a timely fashion to all stakeholders, but especially to the Afghan people. At the same time, it is unacceptable that the Independent Election Commission has been prevented from conducting ballot recounts in several provinces. All political leaders must respect the independence of the electoral management bodies. We call on all candidates and their supporters to exercise restraint and to desist from obstructing the electoral process.

Finally, with regard to development, regardless of what happens in the months ahead, Afghanistan will continue to have considerable development and humanitarian needs. The financial commitments that were made in 2016 at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan will run out next year. The United Kingdom welcomes the holding of a pledging conference in 2020 to address that financing gap and identify development priorities for the remainder of Afghanistan's transformation decade. It is vital that the international community work together to address those needs and align support to Afghanistan.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank the President for convening this meeting. We appreciate the efforts made by the delegations of Afghanistan and Germany on the draft resolution related to the situation in Afghanistan (A/74/L.13), for which we have become a co-sponsor. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item (A/74/348).

This meeting reflects the interest and commitment of the international community to supporting the Afghan people to achieve their aspirations towards security, peace, stability, development and building a State and institutions that are based on the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance. The Afghan parties are shouldering the responsibility to achieve those aspirations. They must therefore ensure that national interests prevail, the crisis and the division in the country are put to an end and measures are taken to strengthen confidence in and move forward the constitutional and political process and achieve reconciliation. The international

community also has an important role to play to support Afghanistan in concluding its transitional phase and overcoming the many challenges it continues to face. Those challenges include sustainable development and economic challenges, as well as security challenges, which remain a grave concern, most notably the repeated attacks and explosions all around the country, which primarily target civilians. We have expressed our condemnation and indignation with regard to those attacks and reaffirmed our constant position to reject violence and terrorism, whatever the motivation or reason behind it may be.

Based on our belief in the importance of seeking peaceful and political solutions to crises and the great value we attach to mediation, along with our commitment to achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan, we are continuing our good efforts, including the mediation efforts among the different parties in Afghanistan, to put an end to violence and bring parties closer together in order to ensure reconciliation and lay the foundations for a political solution. That is what will ensure the achievement of peace and security for the Afghan people and have a positive impact on bolstering peace and security at the regional and international levels.

In that context, we support all international efforts seeking to support peace, security, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan. As part of our mediation efforts, we recently hosted the National Afghan Conference in Doha on 7 and 8 July. Held under the auspices of Germany and Qatar, the Conference included the participation of a large number of representatives from all segments of Afghan society. It also addressed many issues, including women's rights, minority rights, a ceasefire, the freeing of prisoners, the withdrawal of foreign forces and the political future of the country. There was also broad representation and participation by women, which reflects Qatar's position on the effective participation of women in peace processes and efforts to consolidate peace, given their pivotal role in the creation of peaceful and inclusive societies. The Conference succeeded in adopting a joint statement as a first step towards peace and we hope other steps will follow so that at the end of the day we can end violence and establish peace in Afghanistan. We have also hosted many rounds of talks between the United States and Taliban to find a diplomatic solution to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We again welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which sheds light on the importance of peace talks among the Afghan parties and talks between the

United States and the Taliban facilitated and mediated by Qatar. We agree with the Secretary-General that the process will not be sustainable unless it is inclusive and based on a broad consensus. In conclusion, Qatar will pursue its support for Afghanistan in every way possible so as to serve the interests of the Afghan people and bring about the peace and prosperity that we are all eager to achieve.

**Mr. Hinton** (Canada): Canada is very pleased to be able to co-sponsor and support draft resolution A/74/L.13, on the situation in Afghanistan. I would like to thank the German delegation for its skilful chairing of negotiations over the past weeks. This year's draft resolution highlights the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to respond to peace and security challenges, build economic security and protect human rights, including the rights of women. Canada strongly supports references to the meaningful participation of women in the peace process, while also noting the critical urgency of eradicating sexual and gender-based violence.

There remains an urgent need for an inclusive and sustainable political settlement in Afghanistan that protects civilians. In that regard, this is a critical moment for the international community to reinforce its support for the people of Afghanistan. An Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is essential. An agreement that does not bring peace to all members of society — men and women and all ethnicities and religions — will not be a durable peace. Canada encourages all delegations to continue our collective support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan and to work to build a broad consensus across this draft resolution next year.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I commend Germany for its leadership on draft resolution A/74/L.13, which is before us today. However, the draft resolution has as its backdrop the worrisome high levels of violence in Afghanistan. Norway condemns in the strongest terms the attack in Kabul this week that killed one United Nations colleague and injured two others. We also remain concerned about the overall high levels of civilian casualties. We urge all parties to exercise scrupulous due care and fully respect international humanitarian law.

Making progress towards a political settlement is now urgent. In that respect, we welcome the progress made in talks between the United States and the Taliban. We urge the parties to finalize an agreement

in order to catalyse peace negotiations among Afghans that are owned by Afghans. As a consistent partner with Afghanistan, Norway supports an inclusive peace process. The voices of women and civil society are critical to reaching sustainable peace. They must be included in all efforts, both to achieve a negotiated settlement and to implement it.

Dialogues and conferences can be useful in preparing the ground for formal intra-Afghan talks. The event co-facilitated by Qatar and Germany from 7 to 8 July was a milestone. It brought together a wide range of actors from Kabul, including several cabinet-level officials and members of the Taliban. We similarly welcome the past and current efforts of Russia, China and other regional actors to promote dialogue. There is, and should be, room for a range of complementary initiatives.

At the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan nearly three years ago, the National Unity Government committed to ensure effective, democratic and inclusive governance, which includes credible, inclusive and transparent elections in accordance with the Constitution. The parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019 showed that only limited progress has been achieved towards meeting that critical goal. It is incumbent upon all actors, including all candidates, to take the next steps in the electoral process in a responsible and transparent manner so that the brave Afghan women and men who voted on 28 September can have confidence in the outcome.

While challenges remain, there have been important achievements in the area of education, including girls' education. Looking forward, our focus should be on preserving those achievements and securing a sovereign, independent Afghanistan, with human rights for all, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution. Afghanistan must also be able to take care of its own security and defend itself with its own defence forces, without the need of a continued foreign military presence.

The pledges made at the Brussels Conference in 2016 will expire next year, and we look forward to a new donors conference. Afghanistan will need considerable support in the foreseeable future, and Norway will continue to be a consistent development partner. But, before the donors conference, we should have an open-minded discussion on its approach and composition and our development assistance, including reflecting on what has worked and on where we can collectively do better. Peace will bring both challenges

and opportunities, and Afghanistan's positive record on adherence to previous commitments should be taken into account.

**Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his latest report on Afghanistan (A/74/348).

Bangladesh wants to see a rapid transformation and institutionalization of democracy in Afghanistan, which is critical to its journey towards stability and self-reliance and, above all, pursuing a negotiated settlement to end the devastating conflict, as was observed by the Secretary-General in his latest report. The Government and the people of Bangladesh have deep empathy for the brotherly people of Afghanistan. We appreciate the enormous ongoing efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan to achieve sustainable peace and development, which deserve the consistent and meaningful support of the international community.

The process has to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. Bangladesh remains consistently and actively engaged in the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan through its participation in various international meetings and conferences. Bangladesh stands firmly alongside Afghanistan in its fight against terrorism. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and violent extremism and do not allow our soil to be used by any terrorist. We condemn the 24 November terrorist attack on a United Nations vehicle in Kabul.

We support the United Nations continued demonstration of unflinching support for Afghanistan's development. We also express our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan and appreciate the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Under the leadership of Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh attaches the highest importance to its relationship with its neighbours, particularly those in South Asia. Afghanistan features prominently in that regard. The relationship between Bangladesh and Afghanistan is founded on a shared history, culture and religion. We cherish the centuries-old traditions and values of our two countries. We are witnessing remarkable socioeconomic development in Bangladesh, and we stand ready to share our development experiences with Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of women's empowerment, basic education, community health care, sanitation, human resources development and humanitarian assistance.

Many Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working to contribute towards Afghanistan's development. Building Resources Across Communities, the world's largest NGO with origins in Bangladesh, has been working in the socioeconomic sectors of Afghanistan for a long time, with a focus on education, health, infrastructure and capacity-building. Bangladesh has a talented pool of professionals such as teachers, engineers, physicians, nurses and technicians. Afghanistan might consider benefiting from the services of those professionals for the reconstruction and human resource development of the country. There is also an opportunity for Afghanistan to learn from the experiences of Bangladesh in improving its agricultural sector to ensure food security.

We are steadfast in our commitment to a stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. The freedom-loving Afghan people are resilient, hardworking and eager to play a constructive role in the international arena. They desire and deserve a peaceful life. Bangladesh hopes that a pluralistic and prosperous Afghanistan — which is the dream of the Afghan people — will be realized soon.

We thank the German delegation for once again facilitating the work on draft resolution A/74/L.13. We reiterate our support for it.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution A/74/L.13, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan". The draft resolution has now closed for e-sponsorship.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/74/L.13: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New

Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uzbekistan.

**The Acting President:** I call on the representative of Afghanistan on a point of order.

**Mrs. Raz** (Afghanistan): I take the floor on a point of order.

It is very unfortunate that, for the second year and despite concerted efforts and flexibility by many countries, the draft resolution (A/74/L.13) did not achieve consensus and a recorded vote has been requested. However, Afghanistan still strongly believes that this will not affect the absolute support of all United Nations States Members for our common objective of attaining peace, prosperity and stability or their voting in favour of the draft resolution. Throughout all stages of the negotiations process, Afghanistan engaged in constructive discussions in good faith and made the utmost compromise to accommodate realistic proposals that aligned with the needs and priorities of the Afghan Government and the Afghan people, under the principle of Afghanistan's ownership and sovereignty.

We believe that, as a General Assembly draft resolution on Afghanistan, the document should be in conformity with the realities on the ground and reflect the overall efforts of the Government and the international community to address the existing challenges and ultimately achieve peace in my country. We believe that the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations was able to capture this spirit, and we thank the facilitators once again for accommodating realistic proposals and presenting a balanced text. Afghanistan has always served as a platform for cooperation and collaboration among all regional and international actors. We hope to continue to see such collaboration today, as well as in future.

Before I conclude, I would like to express once again my gratitude to all Member States that expressed their commitment by co-sponsoring the draft resolution, as well as to all the representatives who delivered statements today in support of Afghanistan. I humbly request that, once again, they express their support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan by voting in favour of the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Germany on a point of order.

**Mr. Schulz** (Germany): I would simply like to say that Germany, in its capacity as facilitator, fully aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Afghanistan.

**The Acting President:** A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

Palau, Russian Federation

*Draft resolution A/74/L.13 was adopted by 137 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (resolution 74/9).*

[Subsequently, the delegations of Jamaica, the Republic of Moldova and Togo informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Safronkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches particular importance to the careful consideration of the situation in Afghanistan. I listened with great attention and respect to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan. Russia and Afghanistan enjoy friendly relations that nothing can undermine. We pay tribute to the efforts of all in Afghanistan who have lost their lives in the fight against terrorism and express our condolences. We strongly condemn all forms of violence. There can be no military solution to the conflict. We traditionally support the General Assembly's adoption of a resolution based on true consensus whose text should take current realities into account and reflect the international community's complex and integrated approaches to the quest for an effective, long-term Afghan settlement. That is particularly urgent right now, when Afghanistan is undergoing truly fundamental changes.

For the second year running, unfortunately, despite all our active efforts, we encountered attempts by various delegations in the course of the work on the draft text of resolution 74/9 to persistently ignore our views and approaches by pushing through non-consensus categories, and despite the fact that we are extremely actively involved in the efforts to reach a settlement in Afghanistan. In the circumstances, we were compelled to ask for a recorded vote, which we did as friends and active participants in the negotiation process on Afghanistan, because we are trying to ensure that our views are not ignored but actually taken into account and reflected in the text of the resolution.

It is disappointing that participants in the work on the text ignored objective facts pertaining to the threat that terrorism and drugs pose for the security not only of Afghanistan but of its neighbours, including

countries in Central Asia. Terrorist activity is often presented through the prism of the non-consensual concept of violent extremism. We are surprised by the unwillingness of a number of delegations to reflect the efforts to advance the peace process. The fact is that all our steps at this stage should be aimed at assisting the people of Afghanistan in creating a formula for sustainable national reconciliation that involves all the country's social and political forces, including women, of course. And it is still vital to ensure that Afghans themselves retain a key role in resolving their State's problems. There is no need to say how much we respect Afghanistan and its people.

Russia is working to ensure that all Afghan political forces and key external players, without exception, act on a united platform based on the same rules. The result should be the practical implementation of the launch of inclusive inter-Afghan negotiations. This is the aim of the efforts in the Russia-China-United States troika format, with the active participation of Pakistan, which are focused entirely on supporting a peace process led by Afghans themselves. Meanwhile, the recognition of the troika's role is evident in the signals we are receiving from both Afghanistan itself and key regional and international partners about their interest in joining the consultations.

We firmly believe that our common task in negotiating texts such as that of today's resolution is to avoid a disconnect between United Nations decisions and the realities in the region. Deviating deliberately from an objective reflection of the real picture is a dead-end street that does not help to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. We hope that in the future the facilitators will try to take greater and more objective account of the broad range of positions in order to arrive at a consensus document, especially since the Afghan people deserve our full support. It is time to think about making the Assembly's annual resolution more focused on modern Afghanistan's real priorities. Resolution 74/9 has 74 operative paragraphs. Both the United Nations and the region should stick to the principle of fewer words and more coherence in their support of stability and a lasting settlement in Afghanistan. We are confident that our German colleagues can cope with the task. Brevity does not mean a lack of balance.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the Russian Federation has consistently supported the aspiration of the Afghan people to lasting peace in their country. We are confident that the launch of

region-wide cooperation, with the most active possible participation of Afghanistan itself, will contribute to stable, multifaceted development in that part of the world. We are ready to continue to work to enhance the coordination of all States' activities in the interests of ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Cheng Lie** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Assembly's adoption today of resolution 74/9, on the situation in Afghanistan, will help the international community demonstrate its support for the Afghan Government and people, encourage the Afghan Government of National Unity to continue to promote economic and social development, foster peace and stability, enhance regional cooperation and connectivity and facilitate Afghanistan's integration into regional development.

China is not entirely satisfied with some of the language in the resolution, and it is regrettable that some of the text does not fully reflect reality. The part of the text on regional cooperation could have been further improved.

The consultation process on the draft resolution did not sufficiently accommodate the important concerns of Member States, and China is therefore disappointed about the vote. Despite that, and in its efforts to show support for Afghanistan, China still demonstrated its flexibility by voting in favour of the draft resolution. China hopes that in future the sponsors of the draft resolution will strengthen communication with, and fully accommodate the concerns of, all parties, maintain unity among the membership and avoid resorting to a vote. China will continue to help Afghanistan to the best of its abilities in order to promote the achievement of peace, stability and development in that country.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

Before giving the floor to the speaker in the exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

**Mrs. Raz** (Afghanistan): I take the floor in the exercise of the right to reply in response to the comments that the Russian delegation made earlier regarding the peace talks.

I would like to highlight that we have done our utmost to compromise in order to incorporate the key suggestions proposed by our respective Russian colleagues. As we have said before, our policy on the issue is very clear: advancing Afghan-led and -owned peace efforts, as mandated by our Consultative Peace Jirga. That remains the highest priority for the Government and for the people of Afghanistan. My Government is eager to begin direct peace talks with the Taliban in full consideration of the principle of Afghan Government leadership. In that regard, we recognize and welcome all regional and international efforts to facilitate the start of those talks towards achieving a political settlement. However, we also stress the need for the participation of the Afghan Government.

With regard to counter-narcotics issues, we incorporated major elements of the language proposed by the Russian delegation, in accordance with the agreed sequence that appeared in last year's resolution (resolution 73/88), in the hope that we could achieve consensus. There is a need for a real, comprehensive approach based on the principle of the common and shared responsibility of the Afghan Government and, of course, the international community. We need to focus on the root causes and identify pragmatic solutions. Addressing the drug problem goes beyond cultivation. It requires a holistic approach that involves looking into the entire value chain, including the demand and the illicit trade and trafficking of precursors from outside of our country.

Afghanistan is committed to the principles of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, based on non-interference and State-to-State relations with our regional and international partners. To that end, it is only through genuine cooperation and confidence building that we can put an end to the ongoing conflict and create stability in Afghanistan and beyond.

Finally, we thank the Permanent Mission of Germany for acting as a facilitator of the negotiations. In good spirit, they were able to capture all the realistic proposals and recommendations that have become part of the current text.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*