



Security Council

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Provisional

President: Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France)

Members:

Albania	Ms. Dautllari
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Gabon	Mrs. Koumba Pambo
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
India	Mrs. Kamboj
Ireland	Mr. Mythen
Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Norway	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2022/692)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2022/692)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Marcus Potzel, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan; Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Ms. Fawzia Koofi, Former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/692, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I give the floor to Mr. Potzel.

Mr. Potzel: I am afraid that patience is running out among many in the international community regarding a strategy of engagement with Afghanistan's Taliban authorities. There have been some positive developments in the past few months, but they have been too few and too slow and are outweighed by the negatives. In particular, the ongoing ban on secondary education for girls — unique in the world — and growing restrictions on women's rights are signals that the Taliban are indifferent to more than 50 per cent of the population and are willing to risk international isolation. Yet in our discussions with numerous members of the de facto authorities at all levels, Taliban leaders state that that decision has been made and is maintained by Emir Haibatullah Akhundzada, defended by hardliners around him but questioned by most of the rest of the movement, who are either unable or unwilling to change that trajectory. The relegation of

women and girls to the home not only deprives them of their rights, but Afghanistan as a whole is denied the benefit of the significant contributions that women and girls have to offer.

Some of the Taliban's claimed and acknowledged achievements are also eroding. In the past months, there has been a steady rise in security incidents monitored by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), both armed clashes and criminality, as well as high-profile deadly terrorist attacks. Our earlier warnings about the capabilities of the Islamic State-Khorosan Province (ISKP) were dismissed by the Taliban. But, in the past few months alone, ISKP has demonstrated that it can carry out assassinations of figures close to the Taliban, attacks against foreign embassies, as well as fire rockets across Afghanistan's border to attack its neighbours, all while maintaining its long-standing sectarian campaign against Shia Muslims and ethnic minorities. We are particularly concerned about the recent attack at the Russian Embassy in Kabul, which killed 10 people, among them a Russian diplomat. In addition to attacks carried out by ISKP, a number of unclaimed incidents killed and wounded Afghans going about their daily lives, in particular while attending places of worship. I take this opportunity to express our condolences to all the victims and their family members.

The reported presence of the Al-Qaida leader, Al-Zawahiri, in the heart of Kabul and the strike against him, as well as the continued presence of other terrorist groups, have forced a questioning of the Taliban's counter-terrorism commitments, further deepening the trust gap with the international community. Those questions are still unanswered.

Armed clashes persist between the de facto security forces and armed opposition groups in the Panjshir, Baghlan, Kapisa, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. There are disturbing reports, as well as videos and photos, indicating possible serious human rights violations committed in Panjshir. UNAMA has called on the de facto authorities to investigate allegations of extrajudicial killings in Panjshir in line with international standards. The de facto authorities have stated that they will conduct serious investigations into these allegations. The status of these investigations is unknown. UNAMA will continue to carefully monitor this and other reports of serious human rights violations.

The economic situation in Afghanistan remains tenuous. While the Taliban claim they have increased

exports, maintained the value of the Afghani currency and generated solid revenue collection, per capita income has collapsed to 2007 levels, erasing 15 years of economic growth. However, like many aspects of Taliban governance, the details behind their claims remain opaque. Part of the enduring economic downturn is due to liquidity problems that are related to Afghanistan's isolation from the international banking system. Liquidity remains heavily dependent on the cash that the United Nations continues to bring in for humanitarian operations — cash, I must stress, that supports the needs of the Afghan people and does not directly reach the de facto authorities.

But even this funding is uncertain. To date, the 2022 humanitarian response plan has only received \$1.9 billion out of a \$4.4 billion requirement. That is not even half. Amid growing needs and a worsening food-security situation, such a funding gap is all the more alarming given that winter is almost upon us again. In the immediate term, humanitarian partners require \$614 million to support priority winter preparedness, in addition to the \$154 million required to preposition essential supplies before areas get cut off by weather.

We have noted the creation by the United States of the Afghan Fund, which will place half of the \$7 billion of Afghan reserves in an account in Switzerland, where they will be used to help stabilize Afghanistan's macroeconomy. We have been informed that this should be seen as a temporary measure until there is greater confidence in the ability of Afghanistan's Central Bank to create safeguards against money laundering and potential financing of terrorist groups.

But these humanitarian and economic measures will not meet the Afghan people's longer-term requirements. Humanitarian assistance alone cannot replace essential-service delivery systems, such as health and water, nor prevent an economic collapse. UNAMA has been urging donors to take a complementary approach to meeting people's needs by supporting, in addition to humanitarian action, some basic human-needs projects that leverage the capacity of local communities, address underlying structural issues, promote economic growth and seek to minimize the effects of climate change, which are particularly severe in Afghanistan.

There is, so far, no consensus among donors on the provision of limited technical assistance to de facto line ministries or on whether to complete construction of small-scale infrastructure projects. Many donors

feel that the Taliban should not be relieved of their responsibility to meet the needs of the population they control. This includes making their own budget more transparent so that donors can better assess where the real needs are that cannot be met by the de facto authorities.

In the meantime, the Taliban themselves state they are committed to private-sector-led growth that will prevent aid dependency and conditionality. But this will require practical steps that, so far, have not been taken, including a clear legal framework, public investments, a functioning banking system, reliable energy and communication services, and an educated workforce that includes women. Two days ago, I met with a group of women entrepreneurs in Kabul who decided to stay in Afghanistan and continue their business activities. These women must be supported and not forgotten by the international community.

There is also a continued lack of political inclusiveness and transparency in decision-making. Most Afghans do not see themselves represented at any level of governance. There are no consistent mechanisms for citizens to provide feedback to the authorities and little indication that the Taliban wish to even hear any. UNAMA, through its field offices, consistently works to bring together the de facto local authorities and representatives of Afghan communities, including women, to improve the level of consultations.

In its human rights report issued in July 2022, UNAMA set out the human rights situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban took power last year. In addition to the significant curtailment of the rights of women and girls, as well as potential violations of international human rights, UNAMA continues to record violations of the amnesty declaration that the Taliban laudably declared but have inconsistently enforced. Media, previously one of the most vibrant in the region, is struggling from intimidation and restrictions, while civil society remains under threat. The de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice takes on a larger and more intimidating presence in Afghan society.

Since taking over Kabul, the Taliban's self-identified emirate has not been recognized by any State. At the same time, the international community also did not want to see the country collapse. Afghanistan's neighbours in particular adopted a pragmatic approach and sought to deepen economic and trade ties and build

stability. The 26 July Tashkent conference, which for the first time brought together representatives of the Taliban, Member States of the region and traditional donors, provided a platform for engagement and an opportunity for the international community to express its united position on what it expects from the de facto authorities. It was regrettable that the Taliban delegation did not take the opportunity to constructively address these expectations. Nonetheless, we believe that the Tashkent format is useful and should be continued.

Initially, the de facto authorities made commitments with regard to the security and independence of humanitarian assistance. These commitments have also gradually been eroded. We viewed with great concern the detaining by the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and the General Directorate of Intelligence of three women working for United Nations agencies in Kandahar three weeks ago, as well as increasing pressures on our staff and premises and those of other agencies. In general, the de facto authorities are creating operational obstacles that make the work of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners increasingly difficult and in some cases contravene global and well-established humanitarian principles.

If the Taliban do not respond to the needs of all elements of Afghan society and constructively engage within the very limited window of opportunity with the international community, it is unclear what will happen next. Further fragmentation, isolation, poverty and internal conflict are among the likely scenarios, leading to potential mass migration and a domestic environment conducive to terrorist organizations, as well as greater misery for the Afghan population.

That is why we have to engage. The objective of our engagement is to promote governance in Afghanistan that works for the benefit of the Afghan people and respects the norms of the global community. While success is not certain, continued qualified engagement remains the most realistic chance of achieving these objectives.

I thank the presidency for this opportunity to brief the Council. We at UNAMA are looking forward to the arrival of our new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, in Kabul. In the meantime, it has been my honour to convey to the Security Council UNAMA's understanding of the situation at this critical moment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Potzel for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Waly.

Ms. Waly (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the French presidency of the Security Council for the opportunity to address the Council again today.

When I last briefed the Council on the situation in Afghanistan in June 2021 (see S/2021/601, annex II), illicit drug production there had reached a record high of 6,800 tons of opium poppy, and I highlighted an alarming increase in methamphetamine production. The figures for seizures show an increase in trafficking of both heroin and methamphetamines in South Asia and Africa from 2018 to 2021. Heroin seizures at sea in the Indian Ocean have increased since 2021. The events of the past year have led to a situation that is more uncertain than ever, especially with regard to the possible long-term effects on cultivation, production and trafficking in a country that remains the world's largest producer of opiates. Only international action can address those threats to peace and security and support the Afghan people.

(*spoke in English*)

In April of this year, the Taliban de facto authorities announced a complete ban on the cultivation and production of all narcotics, while granting a grace period that practically exempted the most recent major opium-poppy harvest, which ended in July. Following the announcement of the narcotics ban, the national average price of opium skyrocketed, reaching \$190 per kilogram of dry opium and \$127 per kilogram of fresh opium in July — more than double the price of a year ago.

Meanwhile, severe droughts have destroyed food harvests at a time when the Afghan economy is collapsing. More than half the population is living below the poverty line, and close to 19 million people are facing acute food insecurity. For many, illicit cultivation may seem the only alternative to starvation. In the next few months we will see how the narcotics ban and its consequences truly unfold as farmers in Afghanistan make decisions on opium-poppy cultivation for the next major harvest in dire economic and political circumstances. At the same time, it remains unclear to what extent the ban can or will be enforced by the de facto authorities, considering the economic and political realities in Afghanistan and the presence of at

least a dozen armed groups challenging the authorities' rule across 18 provinces, as identified by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

In the absence of the rule of law, terrorists and organized criminal groups can profit from illicit drugs and other forms of trafficking such as firearms, while the desperate conditions in the country are conducive to the trafficking and exploitation of human beings. We must prevent such threats from destabilizing the region and beyond by monitoring the situation, improving regional capacities and helping people. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is conducting its Afghanistan opium-cultivation surveys remotely, and in a week we will be publishing estimates of how much heroin was produced from the most recent harvest. We are also tracking seizure data in the region through our drug-monitoring platform, and we will be tracking human trafficking and migrant smuggling flows as well. In countries that are neighbours of Afghanistan, we are bolstering the capacities of border liaison offices and port-control and air cargo-control units, as well as supporting practical measures to counter illicit firearms trafficking. Meanwhile, we are assisting with the procurement of specialized law-enforcement equipment and promoting regional and interregional cross-border cooperation and information exchange.

Interventions inside Afghanistan are also necessary to help Afghans at risk and in need to the extent that the circumstances allow. In support of the United Nations Transitional Engagement Framework for Afghanistan, UNODC is jointly working with United Nations partners on health interventions related to the use of illicit drugs in the south, north and central regions. We are providing health services to address drug use as well as diagnostic kits for HIV and hepatitis, and we have launched an initiative to map treatment facilities and identify the factors facing high-risk drug users. UNODC is also supporting alternative livelihoods for opium-poppy farmers in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, which account for 72 per cent of the cultivation of opium. That has included income-generation and food-security support to more than 1,000 female-headed households at a time when Afghan women are being deprived of their rights, opportunities and livelihoods.

Afghanistan is at a sensitive juncture. The international community needs to be ready to respond to the drug challenges and illicit flows emanating from Afghanistan, while extending as much help as possible to those affected by illicit drugs inside the country.

We remain committed to supporting the United Nations response.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Waly for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Koofi.

Ms. Koofi: As I was preparing to come to speak before the Security Council, I talked to a lot of women and men in my country, Afghanistan, about the message they wanted me to transmit to everyone here on their behalf. This is what they told me. The people of Afghanistan are disappointed, horrified and feel betrayed that the world is still not vocal about the current gender apartheid under the Taliban, a group that has no international or national legitimacy. The people of Afghanistan are disappointed that during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, our world leaders did not talk about the 40 million people suffering in Afghanistan or the gender apartheid that the regime is perpetrating on its people. Yet they are still hopeful that the Security Council, the main international body accountable for ensuring world order and stability and protecting the rights and dignity of all human beings, will act on their behalf.

My people and our imprisoned homeland want the Council and the world to know what is happening under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. According to various estimates by the United Nations refugee institutions and other groups, more than 2.3 million Afghans have fled the country since August 2021. Millions more are looking to leave the country and are desperately trying to obtain passports and find a way out of Afghanistan. The mass departures of Afghans speak volumes about how they feel about being ruled by a militant group whose ideology represents the darkness of the past and personifies repression and terror. In the past, millions of Afghans left the country because of violence, and we are grateful to those who hosted them then. Now they are fleeing because of violence, uncertainty and economic deprivation, and because of the Taliban's brutality and lack of governance. Under the Taliban, Afghanistan has become a lawless country. In fact, it is probably the only country in the world that does not have a constitution. Our Constitution is in limbo. It does not have a place for women, and it holds no future for the people of Afghanistan.

I would like everyone, especially my brothers in this room, to imagine for one minute what it would be like if Afghanistan — or indeed the world — was

ruled by women and they, as men, were not allowed to leave their homes without being accompanied by a woman. I want them to imagine not being allowed to wear what they want and being deprived of their basic, fundamental human and Islamic right to education and work. Can they put themselves in the shoes of Afghan women for one minute and feel the pain? I am sure it is hard to imagine.

Under the Taliban, Afghanistan has yet again become a safe haven for international military extremist groups in the region, inspired by the Taliban's victory, that are trying to overthrow their own Governments. And it has become a place of horror for women and other groups. The Taliban has issued more than 31 sanctions, edicts and orders to eliminate women in Afghanistan, banning all their basic human rights such as access to education, employment and liberty. As a result, a generation of Afghan women have become prisoners within the walls of their homes. Under the Taliban, the continued elimination of women from public life has made Afghanistan an open prison for women, who make up 55 per cent of Afghan society. Under the Taliban regime, Afghanistan has become the only country in the world where girls from grades 6 to 12 are banned from going to school, and they do it in the name of tradition and religion. In fact, what they do is in contradiction with religion. Our beautiful religion places emphasis on education — the first verse that came to our Prophet, peace be upon him, was: "Read!". The Taliban also blame the culture, while just last week, hundreds of girls in Paktia province protested, calling for respect for their right to education.

The Taliban's systematic elimination of women's rights has become tougher day by day. Afghan women continue to ask me and the members of the Security Council: What have they done to deserve such a burden and to pay the price for such unjust policies? We must admit that we have all failed Afghan women.

Women who used to be the sole breadwinners in their families, who constituted 30 per cent of the country's civil servants, can no longer go into their offices. Their posts are being filled by men, leaving them with no means of income. In fact, when some of those women were asked to come in to sign their monthly payroll, the Taliban asked all the men to leave the office and not to come in to work that day. They do not even let women inside the offices. Can anyone here begin to imagine the indignity that the women of Afghanistan are enduring?

Afghanistan used to enjoy a highly dynamic free media, for which all credit goes to the nation for safeguarding. In the past year, however, 300 media outlets were closed. In 17 provinces, there are now no woman journalists. Before Kabul was handed over to the Taliban, there were 2,756 women journalists working in the media — there are now only 600 of them. The rest of those women were either fired or faced with enormous security challenges, compelling them to give up their jobs.

Those women, who like the Security Council were at the forefront of protecting our common values and efforts to build an equal and just society, are now humiliated and oppressed and are becoming invisible. Those women are former security forces personnel, journalists, judges, Government employees and activists, inter alia. When they take to the streets to protest, they are being silenced with violence. They are being arrested, tortured and disappeared with no accountability. They leave the country in search of peace and a better future, taking extremely dangerous roads to neighbouring countries, whose hospitality we are most grateful for. Their destiny in neighbouring countries is in limbo as they await their final destination. The Taliban see the women of Afghanistan as the main threat to their ideology.

People in my country are experiencing a terrible human rights catastrophe, but that is not the only problem they face. The compromise, flexibility and willingness of the people of Afghanistan and the international community, including the Security Council, to look beyond a dark past of systematic Taliban atrocities and into a future of hope, trust, confidence and peace extends back over a decade.

Let us not forget that, in June 2011, the Council took the difficult decision to separate the Taliban Sanctions Committee from that of Al-Qaida. The Council decided to delist a significant number of Taliban from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to the sanctions regime under resolution 1988 (2011). That is what the Taliban called for, while promising to abandon violence and choose the path of peace. But what was the result? Sadly, the answer was seen in the new wave of violence that brought fresh and prolonged grief, anger and despair to the thousands of Afghan families that have lost their sons, daughters and loved ones.

As of now, that wave of violence has taken on a new form, including through targeted extrajudicial and

mass killings of different segments of the population, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. I would therefore like to ask the Council to recognize what is happening in Afghanistan as a crime against humanity.

Everyone living in Afghanistan is in immediate need of food. It is not a matter of whether it is 24 million or 30 million people — the entire population in Afghanistan is in immediate need of food and aid assistance, as a harsh winter is coming.

The Taliban have a good division of power. They claim that they have increased domestic revenue. They pay their soldiers through the domestic revenue that they have collected and, they want the rest of the international community to feed the people of Afghanistan. There is no accountability from their side to the people.

What comes next? What now? It is high time for the Council to identify and list the individuals involved in those atrocities. Can such a measure influence the Taliban to change their course? We believe that it can. It is only appropriate that the Council extend and strengthen sanctions on the Taliban figures concerned as one of several measures needed to influence the group to leave the path of violence and commit to real dialogue and talks for the true and genuine peace desired by the international community and, more important, deserved by the Afghan people.

I request that the Council initiate, and indeed facilitate, a stronger mechanism for a political dialogue. Today millions of eyes are on the Council and its decision. There is no room for violence. The only solution to the question of Afghanistan is a political dialogue. The Taliban believe that power is a gift to them from God, hence they feel no need to commit to a peaceful dialogue. We must collectively use all the leverage we have — if any — over the Taliban towards a meaningful and genuine commitment to dialogue and a peace process.

That leverage includes engagement, which must be conditional on a basis of give and take. I would like to ask all of those here what they have gained in the past year by engaging with the Taliban. It must be made clear that we are in support of engagement, but only with clear conditions, including with regard to funding and recognition. All of that should be met with an enormous level of flexibility by the Taliban.

A safe and stable Afghanistan that can be a home to all of its citizens is in the interests of our neighbours, the wider region and global security. Let us not trap ourselves into the narrative that the Taliban have created — that they themselves are the only reality for Afghanistan and they are the only ones fighting other military extremist groups. The truth is that no military extremist group can dismantle another; only the people of Afghanistan, including its brave women in their long struggle, can dismantle all military extremist groups. I therefore ask the Council to stand with the people of Afghanistan, especially with its women. In fact, contrary to what the Taliban claim, their return has inspired many military extremist groups that are now operating on Afghan soil in order to pursue their missions.

I must say that we have all worked hard for the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to be extended. With all due respect to my UNAMA colleagues, they have failed to fulfil their commitment on political dialogue and human rights. It is time for all of us to stand on the right side of history, together with the people of Afghanistan in their struggle to restore constitutional order. A safe, secure and peaceful Afghanistan can be a reliable partner of the world and a place for all of its citizens to live.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Koofi for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Mr. Potzel, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and Ms. Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Fawzia Koofi for her powerful remarks.

One year after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, many of the worst fears of the Afghan people are playing out before our eyes, especially for women and girls. It is therefore imperative that the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations be able to reach everyone in desperate need in Afghanistan, including prisoners, internally displaced persons and ethnic and religious minority communities. Against the background of a deteriorating humanitarian situation, the United Nations Population Fund is also warning of alarming disruptions to women and girls' access to basic health services, with potentially catastrophic

consequences. Vital services for survivors of gender-based violence are limited, following the elimination of dedicated reporting pathways, justice mechanisms and shelters. The lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care and rights is having a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls and dealing with it must be a priority. We are also alarmed by the reports of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention and a lack of accountability for those grave abuses of international law.

We echo the Secretary-General's call on the Taliban to adopt concrete measures to end and prevent violations and abuses against children, including their recruitment and use as combatants. And we welcome the recent opening of the Analysis and Outreach Hub in Doha by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and fully support its work on Afghanistan.

As we heard from Ms. Waly, the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan remains a major source of illicit drugs distributed globally, and we hold the de facto authorities responsible for addressing the issue. We are also concerned about the possibility that proceeds from opium cultivation and processing may be used to finance terrorism in Afghanistan and abroad.

Since the Taliban takeover, the entire United Nations system has been clear in its determination to stay and deliver for the Afghan people. As the penholder on Afghanistan in the Security Council, Norway has also been steadfast in its approach. The United Nations and the international community must continue to support the Afghan people, and if we are to do so, we must engage with the de facto authorities. Non-engagement, isolation and total collapse are in the interests neither of the Afghan people or the international community.

In March, the Council agreed on a renewed and reinforced mandate for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to support and promote women's participation and girls' education; to monitor and report specifically on abuses and reprisals against women, including human rights defenders; and to promote inclusive and responsible governance, including the rule of law, all of which will be key to achieving sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan. Since March, UNAMA's mandated tasks and priorities have become ever more vital. But, instead of progress, we have seen the de facto authorities choose a path of greater oppression and exclusion. While the

main responsibility for responding to the humanitarian, economic and human rights crisis lies with the de facto authorities, UNAMA is uniquely placed to support the Afghan people.

No country in the world denies girls the right to a secondary education, with one exception—Afghanistan. It is a devastating and avoidable tragedy. Leaders who oppress half of the country's population will not gain legitimacy either from the Afghan people or the international community.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Marcus Potzel, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Fawzia Koofi, former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament, for her contribution.

We take note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/629) and commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for its tireless efforts in assisting the people of Afghanistan to lay new foundations for sustainable peace and development. However, a year after the Taliban's takeover as the de facto authority, we note the worrisome trends of human rights abuses, a deteriorating security situation and a worsening humanitarian context. We continue to be concerned about the reversals of the rights of women and girls, restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression and indiscriminate and targeted killings, which have reached record levels. We therefore want to emphasize the following points.

First, we hold the view that education is a fundamental right that also serves as a foundation for sustainable development in thriving societies. We therefore join the calls of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, several councils of Islamic religious scholars and many Islamic countries for an end to the restrictions imposed by the Taliban on fundamental rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls, including the ban on girls' secondary education. A modern, progressive and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interests of all parties, and we encourage the Taliban to see the role of women in that context.

Secondly, the grave violations against children and the incidents of attacks on schools, hospitals and key infrastructure must stop. Recruiting children as combatants and using them for supporting roles are clear infringements of their fundamental rights. We

remind the de facto authorities, as those currently in charge of the State, of their obligation to the international community, and we urge them to refrain from inhumane acts that jeopardize the well-being and safety of the Afghan children.

Thirdly, we are appalled, but not surprised, by the Taliban authorities' continued harbouring of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan and Al-Qaida. The situation contradicts the Taliban's commitment to countering terrorism and further jeopardizes the fragile security of the country and the region. We remind the de facto authorities of their State responsibilities and the consequences of such actions under international law.

Fourthly, we condemn the continuing incidents of extrajudicial and high-profile killings, arrests, torture, ill-treatment and other violations targeting former Government officials and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. The Taliban should make genuine efforts to achieve reconciliation in the furtherance of the general amnesty it announced in August 2021. It should undergird such efforts by releasing all civilians who have been arbitrarily detained by various Taliban members and groups over accusations of moral or religious infractions.

Despite those four concerns, we are cautiously encouraged by the decision of the de facto authorities to facilitate the return from abroad of Afghans, including former Government officials and political figures, and the desire to provide them with safety guarantees and limited employment opportunities. We also note the recent diplomatic engagement between the de facto authorities and countries in the region focusing on regional and border security, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, women's rights, girls' education and inclusive governance.

We particularly welcome the meeting of national security advisers of regional countries at which the de facto authorities were encouraged to create inclusive political structures, pursue a sustainable domestic and foreign policy, ensure compliance with the norms of international law, promote inclusive governance and respect for human rights, especially the rights of women, including girls' education, and address a potential security vacuum in Afghanistan.

Before concluding, we encourage further support by donors in addressing the shortfall in meeting

Afghanistan's humanitarian needs, which have been compounded by the sharp economic decline and the devastating combination of decades of conflict, recurring natural hazards, protracted vulnerability and recent earthquakes.

Finally, as a matter of priority, we urge the de facto authority to focus its attention on issues such as girls' education, the removal of restrictions on women, poverty alleviation and improved trade and economic conditions, which are the legitimate expectations of the governed from those who seek to govern.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): Please allow me to acknowledge and thank the briefers for their briefings on the situation in Afghanistan.

India is deeply concerned about the unfolding humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. In response to the needs of the Afghan people and the urgent appeals made by the United Nations, in the past several months India has dispatched several shipments of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, consisting of 40,000 metric tons of wheat, 36 tons of essential medicines, 500,000 doses of coronavirus disease vaccines and 28 tons of disaster relief aid. Those consignments were handed over to the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital in Kabul, the Afghan Red Crescent Society and United Nations specialized agencies, including the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In order to closely monitor and coordinate the efforts of various stakeholders for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and in continuation of our engagement with the Afghan people, an Indian technical team has also been deployed at our Embassy in Kabul.

As always, our approach to Afghanistan will be guided by our historical friendship and our special relationship with the people of Afghanistan. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to reiterate our firmly held conviction that humanitarian assistance should be based on the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. The disbursement of humanitarian aid should be non-discriminatory and accessible to all Afghans. In particular, aid and assistance should reach the most vulnerable first, including women, children and minorities.

As a contiguous neighbour and long-standing partner of Afghanistan, India has direct stakes in ensuring the return of peace and stability to the country. Our approach is guided by the expectations of the

international community, set forth in resolution 2593 (2021) and reiterated in subsequent pronouncements of the Security Council. They include ensuring that the territory of Afghanistan is not used to launch terrorist attacks against other countries, forming a truly inclusive and representative Government, combating terrorism and drug trafficking and preserving the rights of women, children and minorities.

India closely monitors the security situation in Afghanistan and is actively engaged with the international community on issues related to Afghanistan. We strongly condemn the recent attack on Gurudwara Dashmesh Pita Sahib Ji in Kabul on 18 June. Terrorist attacks on the places of worship of the minority community and the targeting of the innocent civilian population continue to be a matter of serious concern. The recent attack outside the Russian Embassy is equally condemnable.

Our collective approach was articulated in resolution 2593 (2021), which unequivocally demands that Afghan territory not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts and specifically mentions the terrorist individuals proscribed by the Security Council, including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. India notes the useful role that the United Nations has played.

Drug trafficking is another menace for the region. We recently seized large shipments of drugs on our high seas and at our ports. As we just heard from Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, the reports issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are indeed concerning. Illicit drug traders and terrorists have a symbiotic relationship. That is another area in which we need to closely cooperate and work together to build up more effective and efficient networks so that we can strongly act against such illegitimate networks. Those networks and groups operate in a way that need to be understood, identified, tracked and ultimately disrupted. We need to further strengthen such cooperation.

On the political front, India continues to call for an inclusive dispensation in Afghanistan that represents all sections of Afghan society. A broad-based, inclusive and representative formation is necessary for long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Peace and security in Afghanistan are critical imperatives for which all of us need to collectively strive. India will continue to play its role in the pursuit

of that objective. The interests of the Afghan people will continue to be at the heart of our efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I too thank Deputy Special Representative Marcus Potzel, Executive Director Ghada Fathi Waly and Ms. Fawzia Koofi for their briefings.

Ireland warmly welcomes Ms. Koofi as she takes her place at the Security Council table today. She does so as an Afghan political leader and a vital voice for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. She also does so as a representative of every Afghan woman who has been denied her right to an active public life by the Taliban.

On a daily basis, we hear reports from Afghanistan of Taliban repression, night raids, extrajudicial killings and torture. We hear of human rights defenders, journalists and media workers being deliberately targeted. That is compounded by the targeting of civilians, places of worship, schools and marketplaces by terrorists operating with freedom of movement.

Ireland condemns in the strongest terms the use of collective punishment by the Taliban against the Hazara community. We deplore incidents of inhumane and degrading punishments by the Taliban for so-called moral infractions.

Women continue to bear the brunt of Taliban control. They are erased from public life, denied health care for lack of a *mahram*, blocked from attending university and shut out of the workplace. They are threatened and abused for how they wear or cover their hair. Ominously, the targeting of women, which the Security Council has consistently condemned for the past year, continues to escalate. Some 370 days ago, the Taliban shut the school door in the faces of a generation of Afghan girls, denying their right to education and their ability to learn and reach their full potential and contribute to Afghanistan's future.

Those abusive and oppressive tactics serve only to underline what we already know. The Taliban know only how to maintain power and consolidate control at the expense of minorities, on the backs of Afghan women and girls. It is the Taliban alone who conduct that regime of repression. It is the Taliban alone who can undo such harm.

As winter approaches, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. The most recent update from the Office for the Coordination

of Humanitarian Affairs on conflict-induced hunger was clear — Afghanistan faces alarming levels of food insecurity, driven by economic shocks and aggravated by climate change, continuing violence and political upheaval.

The protracted humanitarian crisis has devastated families and communities across Afghanistan. Their capacity to cope has been exhausted, and their needs are multiplying. Sustained levels of support from the international community will be required. We urge donors to continue their commitment to the urgent humanitarian response. However, humanitarian support alone will not be enough. The international community must look at constructive ways to make space to provide more basic needs assistance to Afghans, which will help to build resilience and prevent the worsening of crises.

Against that context of crisis, Taliban attacks, intimidation and aggression against women and humanitarian workers are truly reprehensible. Those actions have driven capable women from their jobs, denying them the agency to work and provide for their families. They also prevent many households, and in particular those led by women, from receiving the aid they so desperately need. Taliban actions are crippling the ability of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide life-saving and life-sustaining support. Ireland wholly condemns those senseless acts. We reiterate our calls to the Taliban to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access and to guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

We can and must hold the Taliban to account for its actions. As has been made clear today, what the Taliban is doing in Afghanistan with its actions against the Afghan people and Afghan women and girls is undermining peace and security. It is therefore our responsibility, as members of the Security Council, to respond, to call out abuses and violations and to insist on constructive dialogue in order to find a negotiated path forward. That must include all Afghans and with Afghan women at the table as equal participants. It is our responsibility to take action against the Taliban when necessary and to not be rendered silent in the face of the devastating reality in Afghanistan. That is our mandate, and the Council must live up to it.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Potzel, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ms. Waly, Executive

Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their briefings. I also listened carefully to Ms. Koofi's statement.

Afghanistan has been experiencing vicissitudes and hardships for the past two decades. Its efforts to achieve peace and development have gone through twists and turns and have been full of challenges. Ordinary Afghans have suffered tremendously and endured enormous difficulties. With the hasty withdrawal of foreign troops in August last year, the 20-year war came to an end. Afghanistan has entered a new phase of recovery, healing and peaceful reconstruction.

The history of the past 20 years has once again proved that military intervention and external models simply do not work, and that the future of Afghanistan can be decided only by the Afghans themselves, who must take charge of their own destiny. The international community, including the United Nations, should draw lessons from those 20 years and not pay mere lip service to the phrase "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned" but rather bear it in mind and put it into practice. The international community should remain pragmatically engaged with the interim Afghan Government, interact constructively, provide patient guidance, enhance mutual trust and understanding and help the interim Government build inclusive and moderate governance. It is not constructive to keep accusing or pressuring the interim Government or to instrumentalize the issue of travel-ban exemptions as a bargaining chip for negotiations. That only narrows the space for dialogue and deepens confrontation and divergences. We hope that the members involved will reconsider their positions and show flexibility.

With winter fast approaching, the humanitarian and economic crises in Afghanistan are bound to worsen. The international community should see its most urgent priority in helping Afghanistan alleviate the humanitarian crisis and stabilize its economy. It should not politicize humanitarian and economic issues, nor should it link humanitarian aid and economic development to other political issues.

The right of Afghan women and girls to receive an education and access employment should be guaranteed. We expect the Afghan authorities to make greater efforts to that end and to respond to the international community's concerns. At the same time, safeguarding the rights and interests of Afghan women and girls also means providing them with much-needed

humanitarian assistance so that women and children can first have access to basic daily necessities, such as food and clothing. In that context, Afghanistan's frozen overseas assets should be made use of as quickly as possible to improve Afghan lives and advance economic reconstruction. In the light of recent developments and the Central Bank of Afghanistan's statement, we call for the frozen assets to be fully returned to the Afghan people as soon as possible so that they can be used effectively to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and the Afghan people's suffering.

The security, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and refugee issues facing the country are intertwined and require a comprehensive approach if they are to be fully resolved. We hope the Afghan Taliban will genuinely fulfil its commitments, completely sever ties with all terrorist groups and work with the international community to resolutely combat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and other terrorist groups so as to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a hub for terrorism again.

The interim Afghan Government's efforts to combat poppy cultivation should be encouraged and the international community should actively support Afghanistan's efforts to cultivate alternative crops and completely eliminate sources of drugs. In the long run, all parties should help Afghanistan restore its domestic market, integrate into regional cooperation and connectivity, thoroughly eradicate the underlying causes of unrest and embark on a path to lasting peace and development.

Countries adjacent to Afghanistan, as well as its other neighbours, have long given active support to the Afghan peace process and made tremendous efforts to that end. This month the leaders' summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, reached a significant consensus on Afghanistan that emphasizes supporting it in building an independent, neutral, unified, democratic and peaceful country and eliminating terrorism, war and drugs. China looks forward to working with Russia, Pakistan, Iran and other countries of the region to continue fully leveraging the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, the mechanism of coordination and cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours and other platforms in making unique contributions to the maintenance of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We support seeing the United Nations play an important role in the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and hope that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will actively carry out its mandated activities and form synergies with international and regional efforts. China will continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan within its capabilities through bilateral and multilateral channels, and will deliver concrete, tangible assistance to the Afghan people with the aim of bringing them warmth and hope.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Potzel, Executive Director Waly and Ms. Koofi for their sobering briefings, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Secretary-General for his quarterly report (S/2022/692).

As we have heard, nearly 60 per cent of the population of Afghanistan officially requires humanitarian assistance, but the true need is much greater. The World Bank projects that the country's gross domestic product will have contracted by one third by the end of this year, and the Taliban continues to increase restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms. I cannot speak more eloquently than Fawzia Koofi did about the restrictions on freedom of movement for women and girls and the political, economic, educational and social exclusion that they face. UNICEF estimates that the ban on schooling for girls has cost the Afghan economy at least \$500 million during the past year, but the human cost for each of those Afghan girls is immeasurable.

Some Council members appear determined to politicize the crisis in Afghanistan. I think their assertions are neither accurate nor helpful. The United Kingdom disbursed \$306 million in humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan in the last financial year and has committed a further \$306 million this financial year. We are the second largest donor to the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund, and we continue to work with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others on economic stabilization.

We recognize the importance of restoring liquidity to the banking system, including a functioning Central Bank able to access Afghanistan's overseas reserves. That requires an independent Central Bank, operating transparently, with professional leadership and the

proper controls in place to prevent funds being diverted to terrorism. Calling for reserves simply to be returned before those essential steps is neither responsible nor compatible with a genuine commitment to stopping terrorist financing.

Humanitarian and financial support can help, but it will not resolve Afghanistan's problems unless the fundamental building blocks for stability are put in place. To do that, the Taliban must uphold, rather than repress, human rights, allow unhindered humanitarian access and meet the counter-terrorism commitments made in the Doha agreement. The Taliban must take responsibility for stabilizing the economy. That means creating an enabling environment for greater investment, including ensuring transparency regarding revenue and the budget and enabling women — half the population — to contribute to economic activity.

I take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Special Representative Otunbayeva. It is vital for Afghanistan's future that the Taliban cooperate with her and the United Nations, and we urge all Council members to support her as she implements UNAMA's critical mandate.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Potzel, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms. Koofi for their important and valuable inputs.

I will address two issues of crucial importance on which the Taliban made promises to the international community, which clearly have not been fulfilled.

The first is the situation of women and girls. The recent reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) corroborate the regression in the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. That regression is visible in the complete marginalization of women in political life, the difficulties that they face in accessing justice, the renewal of their work permits and licences and the obstacles to obtaining basic services, such as health care and education. In that regard, we again call for a reversal of the decision to suspend girls' secondary education. The harmful effects of that decision have made them vulnerable to forced labour and early marriages.

The second issue is combating terrorism. Despite the fact that the Security Council has been unequivocal

about the priority of fighting that scourge, terrorist groups continue to operate in Afghanistan and direct links between Al-Qaida and the Taliban are reported. Over the past few weeks alone, several attacks, including one targeting a Russian diplomatic representation in Kabul, left dozens dead or wounded. Many of those attacks targeted minorities. Mexico reiterates that Afghan territory cannot again become an operating base for terrorist activities or a safe haven for them.

Economic recovery is essential for a stable Afghanistan. Mexico believes that priority should be given to economic development without neglecting efforts to protect human rights and combat terrorism.

The effects of segregating women are clear: UNICEF estimates that depriving girls of secondary education has resulted in losses of at least \$500 million to the Afghan economy in the past 12 months. The World Bank forecasts contraction in the gross domestic product by a third in the period between the end of 2020 and the end of 2022.

How can the Taliban ask for the international community's support for the revival of the Afghan economy when women's participation in economic life is obstructed? Given the severe humanitarian needs, the Afghan people cannot do without the significant economic contribution of women.

Meanwhile, we recognize the important work being done by States of the region, and we urge them to exert their influence to make progress in stabilizing Afghanistan.

The international community has also shown its commitment to support, both in humanitarian assistance and in terms of adapting UNAMA's mandate. It is time for the Taliban to respond by respecting the rights of more than 20 million women and girls living confined to their homes and by protecting the population from the scourge of terrorism.

I would like to conclude by acknowledging the work of UNAMA and the agencies, funds and programmes on the ground. I would like to highlight the important work undertaken by the Mission to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in accordance with its mandate. We hope that that will help to mitigate the negative impact of those weapons in the region.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): Let me join other speakers in thanking the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Markus Potzel, Executive

Director Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly and the former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament, Ms. Fawzia Koofi, for their briefings this morning.

Over the past year, there has largely been consensus on the need to address the situation in Afghanistan. What we now need are decisive actions, moving forward. Our approaches require a thorough review of the challenges experienced, the progress made and how we can engage better and more effectively with all the relevant stakeholders.

The economic, humanitarian and security challenges facing Afghanistan remain a pressing concern. They must be confronted through concerted efforts. They also demand that the Taliban engage in open dialogue and demonstrate flexibility, with a view to improving the livelihoods of the millions of Afghans.

The Taliban should also urgently take steps to unite the country, including through the formation of an inclusive Government that represents the interests of all the different ethnic communities and vulnerable groups, including women, young people and persons with disabilities.

The security situation is of great concern. August, marked by a series of attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province, reoccurring clashes with opposition forces and the continued presence of foreign terrorist groups, was one of the deadliest months. It is the obligation of the Taliban to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not a haven for any terrorist group to conduct its heinous activities. The Taliban must therefore take concrete actions to addressing those threats.

With the fast-approaching winter, the already dire material needs will increase correspondingly. We encourage all donors to scale up their assistance. But even as we address the humanitarian concerns, there is an urgent need to consider long-term solutions and pragmatic approaches, including investing in climate-resistant agriculture to improve food security and self-reliance.

The decision by the Taliban on 3 April 2022 to ban the cultivation of opium is a positive step. We welcome the efforts of the UNODC and encourage other relevant United Nations agencies and international partners to support those efforts, in particular those being made to provide farmers with the necessary resources and capacity to cultivate alternative crops.

The issue of how to manage the frozen Afghan assets remains contentious. We urge all relevant stakeholders to work together to identify suitable mechanisms and frameworks to enable the disbursement of these funds in a manner that can revive the ailing economy.

As we have heard today from Ms. Fawzia Koofi, there has been no tangible progress in relation to the repugnant restrictions on women in Afghanistan. It is therefore regrettable that a year on, Afghan girls are still unable to attend secondary education and women are denied opportunities to work and rightfully contribute to the development of their country. We must all demand that the Taliban do what is right: allow the girls their right to get an education and mainstream women into the economy by granting them opportunities to work.

In conclusion, I reiterate that, if they desire and expect to receive any form of international respect and recognition, the Taliban must take seriously its obligations on all fronts, from ensuring that women and girls have their rights to education and opportunities for gainful employment to uniting the country through inclusive governance and fighting terrorism. Kenya welcomes the appointment of Ms. Roza Otunbayeva as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA and stands ready to work with her and her team. I reaffirm Kenya's solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and its willingness to support all endeavours aimed at securing their safety and well-being.

Mrs. Koumba Pambo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Markus Potzel, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, for their briefings on the situation in Afghanistan. We followed with interest the briefing of Ms. Fawzia Koofi, civil society representative.

The briefings we have just heard remind us of the seriousness of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, the consequences of which have an impact on peace and security in the whole region and beyond. In this regard, my country reiterates its appeal to the Afghan authorities to be more open. Mechanisms for inclusion and representation within the administration are essential to calming the political and social climate.

We renew our call on the Taliban to end restrictions on the freedoms of women and girls and violations of their hard-won rights. Access to education for girls,

including secondary education, must be guaranteed. The right to education is an inalienable human right. To this end, we call on those in power to return women to the centre of the country's political, social and economic life by facilitating their access to all areas and sectors of activity.

On the security front, the expansion of drug trafficking, the intensification in recent months of terrorist attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan and the frequent clashes between the opposition and the security forces, as well as the presence of foreign forces on Afghan territory, are all causes for concern. We condemn the use of terror and improvised explosive devices against the civilian population, particularly children. We echo the Secretary-General's appeal for good faith dialogue while calling for the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law.

The humanitarian situation is most alarming. Food insecurity has reached a worrying level. As the winter season approaches, it is urgent that the humanitarian response plan be effective in order to assist the most vulnerable Afghans. The consequences of climate change aggravate this situation and rekindle the urgency to act to avoid a humanitarian disaster. To this end, we call on donors to continue their solidarity by contributing more to the humanitarian response plan.

In conclusion, we reiterate the need for dialogue between the Afghan forces and encourage the international community to maintain its efforts in favour of stability and lasting peace in Afghanistan. Finally, I would like to reaffirm our full support for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for its remarkable work on the ground.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Let me start by thanking today's briefers: Mr. Markus Potzel, Ms. Ghada Fathi Ismail Waly and Ms. Fawzi Koofi. I would also like to welcome the delegations of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan to today's meeting.

Brazil acknowledges the highly important work performed by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and remains deeply committed to upholding and supporting its mandate in favour of a more cohesive, stable and prosperous future for all Afghan citizens. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

(S/2022/692) sheds light on a number of positive developments, which we note with satisfaction. These include the return of former government officials and political figures from abroad; greater engagement between de facto cabinet members and local leadership and constituencies, such as tribal leaders, civil society and the media; and a decrease in the overall number of conflict-related security incidents and civilian casualties compared to the same period in 2021.

Nevertheless, the report also raises unsettling concerns in relation to the establishment of sustainable peace and unity in the country. Chief among such concerns are allegations of extrajudicial killings, torture and other forms of human rights violations undertaken by the de facto security forces, as well as threats, arbitrary arrests and detentions against human rights activists, journalists and media workers. Particularly disturbing are the report's observations on the continuing hardship of Afghan women and girls, who still endure discriminatory policies that jeopardize their future and are at complete odds with relevant international law statutes, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. In the same vein, the rights of women and girls must be entirely upheld and their presence in public life guaranteed if Afghanistan is to follow a sustainable path forward.

Moreover, the de facto administration seems to have failed to take steps in a sincere and meaningful manner to safeguard the rights of the Afghan people and bring about more inclusive and representative structures of governance. In such a scenario, we must renew our call on the de facto Administration to respect its previous commitments and effectively form an inclusive Government, with the adequate participation of women and ethnic and religious minorities.

Brazil also urges the de facto authorities to promote and protect the human rights of the Afghan population with a view to decisively curbing the unacceptable violations noted in the report of the Secretary-General.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that any travel bans on the de facto leaders should be subject to in-depth assessment. Isolating them from interactions with foreign counterparts may prove counterproductive, and therefore may be unlikely to contribute to moderating some of the regime's hardened positions.

Afghanistan's viability as a fully integrated nation among its neighbours and the wider international

community also hinges on long-term development policies that can push the country past the restrictions and uncertainties associated with humanitarian and emergency relief. For that reason, we renew our call for the unfreezing of all assets of Afghan financial institutions.

We also recall our policy of providing humanitarian visas for Afghans threatened by the crisis in their country, with a particular focus on women and girls. To date, more than 5,000 humanitarian visas have been issued.

On 15 August, we marked the one-year anniversary of the regime change and the situation on the ground has yet to improve. As ever, Brazil is ready to support the dedicated efforts of UNAMA and to work alongside the Security Council in order to bring about the future of peace, stability and progress that the people of Afghanistan deserve.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I too would like to thank all the briefers for their updates today, especially Ms. Koofi for her powerful call to action. We must make sure that the women and girls of Afghanistan are not forgotten.

It saddens us to see the Afghan people deprived of their basic right to lead a dignified life. As mentioned in the stakeout today of the 10 elected members of the Security Council and the incoming five, the Taliban has made Afghanistan the only country in the entire world in which girls are banned from attending secondary school. They are restoring the total oppression of women and denying them their specific rights, depriving them from what we as the international community have affirmed and reaffirmed in our words and actions as universal rights.

In excluding women from rights, the de facto authorities are effectively treating roughly half of the population as lesser human beings. They are denying them their humanity. No matter how bad the economic situation is, no matter how bad the security situation is, no matter how much tradition and religion are misconstrued, there can be no rationale for excluding and oppressing women. We as the international community cannot afford to concede on such fundamental norms.

We know that there can be no lasting peace and security, no development or prosperity if half the population are deprived of their basic rights. Ensuring those rights should be front and centre of all efforts to

secure order and the rule of law in Afghanistan. We cannot sacrifice that in the name of resolving more urgent issues. That is why Albania considers ensuring those rights as a necessary condition for addressing any of the major challenges facing Afghanistan today and in the future.

We strongly support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in helping the de facto authorities to implement what they have committed to. We urge them to work with the newly appointed Head of UNAMA and engage with her to implement the Mission's mandate.

Given the fact that winter is approaching, we call for more humanitarian support to be distributed to international organizations. We also call on the de facto authorities to respect and ensure the full and unimpeded freedom of movement of UNAMA, as well as to ensure humanitarian access. We also call on them to cut all ties with terrorist networks and groups that are responsible for violent attacks in Afghanistan and beyond. We insist that the de facto authorities earn the international community's acceptance by fulfilling the minimal demands it places on them if they want Afghanistan to be accepted as a member of world society.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank all the briefers for their statements, which have once again confirmed the bleak situation in Afghanistan. The discrimination against women and girls, the collapse of the local economy, the lack of liquidity and the continued terrorist attacks, in addition to extreme weather phenomena, global commodity price spikes and aid shortages, have created what can be described as a perfect storm in Afghanistan.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs noted that humanitarian agencies are compelled to provide fewer rounds of assistance than originally planned. With limited aid available, there are increasing concerns that the ongoing harassment and intimidation of female humanitarian staff will mean that women and girls who live in regions that are hard to reach will be in danger of being left behind in Afghanistan.

To say that the current situation is unbearable and will lead to further suffering and instability is an understatement. In order to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, the Afghan economy must be revitalized. In that respect, the United Arab Emirates welcomed the announcement by the United States of the establishment of the Afghan Fund, which will manage \$3.5 billion of

Afghan Central Bank reserves to benefit the people of Afghanistan. That is a step in the right direction.

Further similar steps must be taken to facilitate financial transactions and reactivate banking services in order to increase liquidity in the Afghan economy. As Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths highlighted to the Security Council in August (see S/PV.9118), international financial institutions and others must step up their efforts to ease financial arrangements in order to reduce risks with a view to keeping the economy running. We hope that the measures taken to operate the Afghan Fund will be helpful in that regard.

For its part, the United Arab Emirates continues its solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, including through its efforts leading to the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross on contributing \$4 million to cover the operational and administrative expenses of hospitals in Afghanistan, including payments to cover staff wages and medical supplies, as well as electricity and fuel expenses.

We stress that revitalizing the Afghan economy will be impossible if half the population is excluded from the country's social and economic life. According to UNICEF and as noted by some Council members, depriving girls of secondary education translates into a loss of at least \$500 million for the Afghan economy in the past 12 months. That demonstrates the close relationship among the participation of women, the economy's performance and development.

We regret that the Council was not able to reach consensus to issue a statement earlier this month on girls' education in Afghanistan and other challenges facing the country. The situation of women and girls, economic recovery and security concerns are all challenges that threaten peace and security. The Council must be ready to tackle them with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The Council should focus on our shared objectives in order to help the people of Afghanistan and avoid unnecessary divisions concerning the priorities that should be addressed in relation to this dossier.

We also stress that it is not just the Security Council that wants Afghan girls to be educated. It is primarily what Afghan families want for their girls and it is what the girls want for themselves. The Afghan people are doing everything they can to see their girls back in school. The de facto authorities must listen and respond.

That leads me to my final point on the security situation. One of the observations in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2022/692) concerns the emergence of new anti-Taliban groups and an increase in related anti-Taliban security incidents. The Taliban's methods of governance and policy-setting, particularly by issuing edicts that do not take due account of the interests or wishes of the Afghan people, will further fuel discontent in the mid- to long term. If the Afghan men and women are not heard by those who govern, lasting peace in the country will be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

In the light of the latest security challenges, the Security Council should insist on its expectations, as articulated in the relevant resolutions, with regard to the need to establish an inclusive Government and the full participation of women. Such a Government must be able to impose security on all territories in Afghanistan and prevent it from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, which would constitute a threat to regional and international peace and security. We reaffirm the importance of keeping lines of communication open with the Taliban, because closing those channels will not achieve the desired results in the areas where the international community hopes to see progress.

The United Arab Emirates will remain steadfast in its support to the Afghan people and will continue to constructively engage in the Council, as well as through regional arrangements, to improve the situation in Afghanistan.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Ghada Waly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for her briefing on the narcotics situation in Afghanistan. We also listened carefully to Mr. Markus Potzel, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Acting Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and to Ms. Fawzia Koofi, the representative of civil society. We took note of the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in that long-suffering country (S/2022/692). We also want to express our condolences to those affected in the wake of yet another bloody act of terror in Kabul last week.

On 29 August we held a very useful discussion in the Security Council Chamber (see S/PV.9118) devoted to the anniversary of the infamous 20-year campaign in Afghanistan and its sad consequences, which the

people of Afghanistan continue to deal with to this day. However, today we are still hearing our Western colleagues, led by the United States — including from the rostrum of the General Assembly — lamenting the horrific results of the Taliban's 12 months in power, while trying to shift all responsibility for the failure of their 20-year war and the deteriorating situation onto the new authorities.

The current internal political situation in Afghanistan is indeed a very difficult one. The security risks are worrying. The country is once again being shaken by terrorist attacks organized by militants from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-Khorasan Province, with religious and ethnic minorities victimized by their heinous acts, including women and children. Tragically, two employees of the Russian Embassy in Kabul also died at the hands of terrorists at the beginning of September. It is clear that ISIL is using all the resources at its disposal to aggravate the internal political situation, creating an atmosphere of fear and despair among the population and a hotbed of instability that could ultimately spill over into Central Asia and then Russia. We see this as an attempt to demonstrate the inability of the Taliban authorities to control what is happening in the country.

We are also concerned about the increase in narcotics production, which has reached unprecedented proportions over the years. We realize that the authorities' efforts are inadequate, but that comes as no surprise, considering that the issue of drugs was swept under the carpet for years by the Administration in Kabul and its masters in Washington while being used exclusively for money-laundering. We welcome the participation of the representative of UNODC in today's discussion and count on UNODC's concrete assistance in the context of the international efforts to help curb the drug threat.

It is simply inappropriate to criticize the social and economic situation in the country. Despite the Council's efforts through resolution 2615 (2021) to expand the channels for unconditional humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, the reality is that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian agencies continue to face a slew of problems due to fear of sanctions. It is clear that Western donors are not interested in expanding assistance beyond basic needs and early-recovery programmes. In that context, the situation regarding the unfreezing of assets is particularly blatant. It would seem that after

numerous appeals to the United States and its allies by the Afghan people themselves, American academia and a number of civil-society representatives, there should have been some progress on the issue. Alas, we have merely become witnesses to an announcement about the transfer of the Afghan assets to a special account in a Swiss bank, which will be inaccessible to the country's authorities and will be spent on the implementation of temporary socioeconomic and humanitarian projects. We call for the stolen assets to be immediately returned to the Afghan people.

At the same time, we are hearing constant accusations against the Taliban leadership of systematic violations of human rights, especially of women and girls. We consider the problems in Afghanistan today extremely serious, and they should be remedied. But neither should we ignore the fact that the result of the country's 20-year democratization process has been to put Afghan women and girls' principal right — the right to life — under threat. However, it has been a long time since we were surprised by the methods used by Washington, with the support of its allies, in relation to regimes that it deems undesirable. We are familiar with their use of unilateral sanctions, political pressure and ultimatums. At the same time, our colleagues will carefully erase from history evidence of the war crimes that the United States and other NATO countries committed in Afghanistan, ensuring that those crimes will never end up in the reports of United Nations bodies or the International Criminal Court (ICC), as though they never happened. Nevertheless, we expect the ICC to resume its work collecting evidence on war crimes by the United States and its allies in Afghanistan and that the perpetrators will be held to account.

Building a sustainable peace in Afghanistan will be impossible without international assistance to its people in post-conflict reconstruction and economic development, while also resolving its long-standing problems in the areas of terrorism and drugs. At the same time, it is important to maintain dialogue with the new authorities while refraining from using blackmail. Its own history of relations with the Taliban should have taught the United States the futility of such a policy. It will be essential to work patiently with the Afghans to create a State that is politically and ethnically inclusive, free from terrorism and drugs, economically stable and developed, and where the rights of all its citizens, including religious and ethnic minorities, women and girls, are respected and protected.

The work of UNAMA should be based on just such constructive, pragmatic and comprehensive approaches. We have high hopes for the efforts of the incoming Head of UNAMA, Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, considering her understanding of the specifics of the situation, the country and the region as a whole. However, these issues should not be used as preconditions for the resolution of urgent humanitarian and economic problems. In that regard, it is unacceptable to tie the Taliban delegation's travels to attend negotiations on issues of peace and stability to the human rights situation. That approach only harms the cause and hinders regional players in contributing effectively to a peaceful solution.

Russia has consistently advocated efforts to strengthen cooperation with our brother people of Afghanistan, whom we will continue to provide with assistance aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement.

We also continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghans, despite attempts to exclude Russia — one of the world's major agricultural Powers — from international trade and the obstacles created to prevent our cooperation even with the World Food Programme. We will continue to cooperate with Afghanistan through bilateral contacts with the de facto authorities and other Afghans in regional formats, including the Moscow format, meetings with regional neighbours, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): We thank Executive Director Waly, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Potzel and Ms. Koofi for their briefings. We also thank the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, for accepting the Secretary-General's call to lead the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) at this critical juncture. The leadership and staff of UNAMA deserve special praise for their tireless efforts in Afghanistan.

The most recent quarterly report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/692) makes clear the dire implications of the Taliban's takeover. The security situation is deteriorating. The Taliban have restricted most human rights for women and girls, refusing to let girls go to school past the sixth grade. Afghanistan's economy

continues to decline. And the already overwhelming humanitarian needs are growing.

With regard to the security situation, two deadly terrorist attacks occurred in Herat and Kabul since the Security Council previously met to discuss Afghanistan (see S/PV.9118). We condemn those heinous acts of terrorism, which, coupled with the recent revelation that the Taliban were sheltering the leader of Al-Qaida, underscore the importance of remaining clear-eyed in our dealings with the Taliban.

Concerning human rights for women and girls, we must recognize that 17 September marked one year since the Taliban banned girls from attending secondary school. Indeed, the United States regrets that some members of the Security Council prevented it from acknowledging that reprehensible milestone more formally. A Taliban spokesperson recently affirmed to an international news outlet that Islam grants women the right to education, work and entrepreneurship. The spokesperson then claimed that the Taliban first need to create a so-called safe environment for women and girls in the workplace and in schools. We saw a similar media report along those lines this morning. But we need action, not words.

Let me remind the Taliban that Afghan girls had attended secondary school for two decades until one year ago. During that time, the primary threat they faced was from the Taliban. The United States and most other members of the Council are merely echoing what Afghan parents have already told the Taliban. Afghan parents in many provinces are in the streets demanding that schools be reopened to their daughters. The Taliban should listen. In the past month, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and I have met with several different groups of Afghan women. They told us that not all Council members have accepted their invitations to meet since the Taliban takeover. All Council members should listen too.

For our part, we are doing everything we can to assist Afghan women and girls in the light of the Taliban's destructive policies. Last week, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the launch of the Alliance for Afghan Women's Economic Resilience, which will foster career-enhancing, educational and entrepreneurial opportunities for Afghan women living in Afghanistan and third countries. We ask that Council members join us in pursuing creative ways to support all Afghans during this particularly harrowing time.

The United States is taking action to address Afghanistan's dire economic situation as well. This month, in coordination with international partners and Afghan economic experts, we announced the establishment of the Fund for the People of Afghanistan, which will protect, preserve and make targeted disbursements of \$3.5 billion in Afghan Central Bank reserves to provide greater stability to the Afghan economy. Robust safeguards are in place to prevent the funds from being used for illicit activity.

As we just heard, some Council members have made it a sport to criticize our efforts. Let me repeat what we have said before: in the light of what we know about the Taliban's apparently renewed willingness to harbour the leader of Al-Qaida, no country that is serious about containing terrorism in Afghanistan would advocate giving the Taliban ready access to \$3.5 billion in Afghan Central Bank assets at this time. We believe that Council members' attention would be better spent on what more they can do to address the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis in Afghanistan.

For its part, just four days ago, the United States announced an additional \$327 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan to respond to the ongoing crisis, which brings United States humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan to more than \$1.5 billion since August 2021. We will continue to focus these discussions on what Council members can do to help Afghanistan. The United States has stepped up. We have contributed more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance since August, issued seven general licenses, championed a Security Council resolution (resolution 2626 (2022)) that was explicitly designed to enable relief organizations to meet basic needs and have worked with international financial institutions to make available another \$1.5 billion for basic services in Afghanistan. We remain deeply committed to providing essential assistance to the Afghan people and will continue to work closely with UNAMA to aid the Afghan people now and in the future.

I would just say to my Russian colleague that Russia was chased out of Afghanistan in the 1990s. She is therefore not in a position to lecture us — or anyone else — on how to go about our affairs. Russia had a security blanket free of charge for 20 years, while we were there. And I know that Russia would like nothing more than for our troops to be bogged down in Afghanistan. As my Russian colleague has said many

times, it is their neighbourhood, and now they need to step up.

I do not mind saying that the previous time we had this discussion, the representative of the Russian Federation could claim only the supposed industrial achievements of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as Russia's contribution to the Afghan people in its current time of need. Let me repeat that they need to step up.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Potzel, Ms. Waly and Ms. Koofi for their informative briefings.

I would like to make three points.

First, with regard to human rights, in particular the rights of women and children, they are being trampled on by the Taliban in flagrant defiance of the commitments that were made. Women and girls bear the brunt of the Taliban's edicts, which govern all aspects of their daily lives and deprive them of their most basic rights and freedoms. We are extremely concerned about the persistence of violence against women, their exclusion from public life, the imposition of the full veil and the restrictions of women's access to public services, secondary education, the economy and most positions, including in the Administration.

We are also concerned about women being denied access to justice, the rising rates of forced marriages, including of children, the restrictions on the freedom of peaceful demonstration, arrests, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention. The myriad forms of repression also affect children, who are particularly vulnerable. We call for an end to impunity for the perpetrators of such violations and the implementation of human rights recommendations by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). There can be no recovery for Afghanistan, including economic recovery, without the full participation of women and girls in the process.

Secondly, we have seen that the security situation in the country has remained extremely fragile for several months. On the counter-terrorism front, the attacks by Da'esh-Khorasan have continued, and it has shown that it can strike in new provinces and attack civilians and diplomatic targets alike. It is also obvious that the

ties between the Taliban and Al-Qaida have not been broken, despite the Council's clear demands.

As we have seen, drug trafficking remains a destabilizing factor at both the regional and international levels. Afghanistan remains one of the three countries that produce more than 95 per cent of the world's opium-poppy cultivation. Trafficking in methamphetamines manufactured in Afghanistan is also expanding, and we see no tangible signs of any progress being made in that regard.

Lastly, France will not turn a blind eye to the humanitarian situation, which remains worrisome. France has disbursed more than €120 million in humanitarian aid since August, as well as providing emergency aid to the victims of flooding and the earthquake that occurred in June. We are contributing to the funding provided by the European Union, which has mobilized more than €1 billion this year for Afghanistan. Amid reports of attempts by the Taliban to interfere in the delivery of humanitarian aid, we continue to demand that the entire population have full, unimpeded access to that assistance. The Taliban has shown no sign that it considers the needs and expectations of its own people. The international community is ready to work with Afghanistan, under certain non-negotiable conditions, and we will continue to evaluate compliance with them based on the Taliban's actions. The terms of resolution 2593 (2021) could not be clearer on commitments, which cannot be bartered or relegated to the background. This is not the time to be less demanding or to grant the Taliban unilateral financial concessions.

France reiterates its full support for the Afghan people and the United Nations, in particular UNAMA, whose excellent and crucial action on the ground I want to commend.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I feel compelled to respond to the statement made by our United States colleague and his claims that Russia has done nothing to benefit Afghanistan. In that regard, just as at the last meeting of the Security Council on Afghanistan (see S/PV.9118), it is important to recall the state in which the Union of Soviet

Socialist Republics left Afghanistan. I am sure that some Afghans still remember it very well. However, the United States cannot boast of the methods it used to combat that Soviet legacy in the 1990s or of what became of Afghanistan with the assistance it provided during those years. Nor can it be proud of the shape it left Afghanistan in last year. The issue here is not who was worse or who was better. The issue is that we are against Washington shifting the blame onto anyone for what was done in those 20 years.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I do not want to get into a back-and-forth dialogue. However, I just want to say that it seems that our Russian colleagues are determined, perhaps even desperate, to demonstrate that the United States is as violent, duplicitous and manipulative as Russia is in Ukraine, for example. They will never succeed in that.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to remind all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, so that the Council can conduct its work in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Faiq (Afghanistan): I thank you, Madam, for convening today's meeting. I would like to congratulate you and your team on your successful presidency of the Council during the month of September. I also want to join others in thanking the briefers for their thorough and alarming briefings on Afghanistan. I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2022/692). I would also like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the people of Afghanistan to Secretary-General António Guterres for appointing Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, a dedicated and highly experienced woman, as his new Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Today's meeting is being held at the start of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. During last week's plenary session in the Assembly, we heard from world leaders about the unprecedented challenges facing the world today and ways to address them. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is currently suffering from the combined impact of those global challenges,

as well as a severe social, political, economic and humanitarian crisis following the takeover by the Taliban.

While our main motto at the United Nations is to leave no one behind, and while Afghan women, who make up half of Afghan society, played a critical role in all aspects of political and socioeconomic development under the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals in Afghanistan for two decades, Afghan women and girls under the rule of the Taliban are now deprived of their fundamental human rights and freedoms. They are being systematically erased from all social, political and economic areas of life. It has been more than a year since secondary and high schools were closed to girls. More than 24 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian assistance and 90 million are suffering from acute food insecurity. Afghan refugees and migrants face a dire situation and an uncertain future. While many countries continue to make every effort to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Afghanistan's two decades' worth of hard-earned gains, including national action plans and progress on the social, economic, security and political fronts, devised and adopted by Afghan experts with the support of the international community, have been reversed or completely undone.

I want to reiterate that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Afghan women and girls must be restored, and the schools must be reopened to girls immediately. Women should be allowed to fully exercise their God-given rights, build their capacities and make an equal contribution to rebuilding our war-torn country. I call on the Council to join us in that appeal and to support Afghan women. I would like to thank the previous speakers who strongly expressed their support for the people of Afghanistan, particularly women and children.

Let me express our profound appreciation to all the international partners, countries of the region, United Nations funds and programmes, local and international non-governmental organizations and donors that have stood by the Afghan people during this difficult time, and despite all the challenges and impediments have continued to deliver humanitarian aid and essential services to the people of Afghanistan. We hope that the pledging countries will continue to provide support to the humanitarian response plan. It is very important to ensure that humanitarian aid continues to be delivered

without hindrance to all vulnerable people, including women, children and minorities, across the country.

Let me stress, however, that humanitarian assistance is not a sustainable solution to prevent the growing humanitarian crisis or to combat poverty in the long run. A sustainable, long-term approach will involve taking concrete steps, including the resumption of development assistance based on national economic and development programmes, which must be implemented by an accountable, legitimate and inclusive Government.

It has been more than a year that the people of Afghanistan and the international community have waited and expected the Taliban to respond to their calls and fulfil their commitments towards core issues. Those include the opening of girls' schools and protecting and respecting the fundamental human rights of all citizens without any gender, ethnic or religious discrimination, as well as the formation of an inclusive and accountable system based on the rule of law, justice and the will of people. However, that has not materialized, and the Taliban has disappointed all of us.

I want to thank all regional and international partners for supporting the demands of the people of Afghanistan and for constantly highlighting those calls in their statements and in their engagements with the Taliban.

Contrary to the Taliban's claims and their announced general amnesty, there are credible reports by the United Nations and other international institutions on widespread violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests and the detention of former Government officials, security forces members, journalists, human rights activists, civilians, protesters, individuals accused of affiliations with armed groups and the National Resistance Front, the forced displacement of particular ethnic groups in different provinces of Afghanistan, including Baghlan, Panjshir, Takhar, Sari Pul and Badakhshan, as well as the shooting of prisoners of war. Those acts are gross violations of human rights and war crimes and subject to the prosecution of the International Criminal Court.

The restrictions on the freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the repression of media, mean that many incidents, including cases of forced marriages and child marriages, are not reported and perpetrators are not held accountable. The Taliban must stop those

acts, which contradict international humanitarian law and international human rights law and Islamic values. Those acts have also caused fear and uncertainty about the future and have pushed human capital to leave the country and increased the flow of migrants and refugees.

Let me thank the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan for his efforts and for presenting the first report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August 2021 (A/HRC/51/6). I want to highlight that there is a need for an effective reporting, monitoring and investigation mechanism to avoid impunity and ensure a stronger response to human rights violations in Afghanistan.

In the course one year alone, owing to the Taliban's stubbornness and unwillingness to adhere to its commitments and their continued ruling by force, Afghanistan has become entrenched in the worst economic and humanitarian crises in its history, making Afghanistan the only country in the world that denies girls the full right to education and the worst place for women and girls. In addition, natural hazards, earthquakes and droughts, along with the fallout of the banking system, the precarious security situation and inadequate access to services have further exacerbated that dire situation.

Furthermore, the continued presence and operation of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, including Al-Qaida and Da'esh, have greatly increased the security threats to the people of Afghanistan, the region and beyond. The presence of the leader of Al-Qaida, who was killed in Kabul last month, is a clear indication of the continued ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups and an evident violation of counter-terrorism commitments by the Taliban. In addition, the recent attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province on civilian targets, including Shia Hazaras, Hindus, Sikhs and Sufis, are indicative of the inability of the Taliban to ensure peace and security across the country.

I would like to underline that the Afghan people have been victims of terrorism in the past and are victims now. Let me stress that there are no good and bad terrorists, and terrorism does not recognize borders. We must collectively and genuinely condemn and fight against all forms and manifestations of terrorism — inside and outside of our borders — including its root causes, sanctuaries and financial resources.

As Afghanistan stands on the verge of a large-scale economic collapse, there is a need for collective and genuine cooperation by all stakeholders — Afghan people, including the Taliban, regional and international partners — to support the convening of a national dialogue to overcome the current political deadlock and provide the people of Afghanistan with the opportunity to agree on core issues through a framework or road map for the formation of a representative and accountable system based on the rule of law, justice and the will of the people.

I would like to welcome the recent communiqué of the United States-Europe Group on Afghanistan, which, among other important issues, emphasized that enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan requires a credible and inclusive national dialogue leading to a constitutional order with a representative political system.

I reiterate that only with an inclusive, representative, accountable and functional system, involving professionals and credible people from all backgrounds with good reputations, and the full participation of women can we save Afghanistan from the ongoing crisis. Hence, we call on the Council to extend its full support to that plea in line with the mandate entrusted upon it by the Charter of the United Nations and existing Security Council resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan.

I thank UNAMA and the entire the United Nations family for staying and delivering humanitarian aid and for helping prevent a humanitarian catastrophe so far. However, we expect a stronger and more effective role and engagement by the United Nations in Afghanistan. I want to thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other international organizations for their efforts in addressing the issue of Afghan migrants, but I want to call on them to continue in that direction and to stress that Afghan migrants and refugees require their support and attention.

I would like to call on the Security Council to effectively use all existing resources, including sanctions, for ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan. We urge the international community to stay actively engaged in Afghanistan and in helping create people-centred and long-lasting solutions that will improve the lives and livelihoods of all Afghans.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Taliban that no system can survive without respecting and embracing

the will of the people and that ruling the country by force and fear will result only in continued conflict and will deprive Afghanistan of sustainable peace, security and development. We appeal to the Security Council to take a united position in addressing the situation in Afghanistan to eliminate terrorist threats, protect Afghan women and girls, increase humanitarian support to Afghanistan and help ensure a truly inclusive future for all Afghans, including by implementing Security Council resolutions for self-sustaining and long-lasting solutions for Afghanistan — an Afghanistan that is at peace with itself, the region and the world. The people of Afghanistan deserve peace, tranquility and prosperity.

I end with a quote from Somaya Faruqi, the former Captain of the Afghan Robotics Team, “Do not let our country become the cemetery of our goals and dreams.”

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mrs. Ershadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. I also thank the briefers for their insightful briefings and updates on the recent developments in Afghanistan.

Over a year since the Taliban took over, the situation in Afghanistan remains challenging. According to the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/692), Afghanistan is dealing with a rising humanitarian crisis, a major economic downturn, challenges associated with the establishment of an inclusive Government and women and girls being denied their basic rights, including access to education. Given the dire circumstances, I would like to emphasize the following points.

The international community must continue to assist Afghanistan. Other conflicts must not divert attention from, or lead to ignoring, the situation in Afghanistan. While humanitarian and development assistance is critical to keeping Afghans alive, maintaining basic services and bolstering the economy are not long-term solutions and must be supplemented by sustained economic growth.

As we have constantly said, the frozen assets belong to the Afghan people and must be returned in full, without being politicized or made conditional in any way. Sanctions imposed against specific individuals and entities in Afghanistan must also not obstruct humanitarian, economic or development cooperation

with Afghanistan. The sanctions should not have an impact on efforts to revitalize the Afghan economy, as the Secretary-General has repeatedly called for measures to give the Afghan economy breathing room.

Afghanistan is a member of the international community, and the de facto authorities must acknowledge that fact and fulfil their international obligations, particularly the repeated calls for the formation of an inclusive and representative Government that accurately reflects Afghans’ multi-ethnic society. Only a Government comprised of all Afghans can guarantee and protect their rights.

Terrorism and the emergence of terrorist groups pose another serious threat to Afghanistan, its neighbours, the region and the international community. The reports on the resurgence of Da’esh-affiliated terrorist groups are of concern, especially in the light of the recent terrorist attacks, claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province, outside the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Kabul on 5 September, which resulted in the deaths of at least six people, including two Russian Embassy employees, and injured several more. The de facto authorities must commit to fighting terrorism and must ensure that they take all appropriate steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises against any intrusion or attack. Afghanistan must no longer serve as a haven for terrorist groups, such as Da’esh and Al-Qaida.

Equally critical, efforts to combat drug trafficking must be a priority. Every year, Iran is directly affected by that menace and pays a high price for it. Over the past 40 years, Iran has played an active role in combating drug trafficking in the region, during which time nearly 4,000 members of Iran’s law enforcement forces were martyred, and more than 12,000 other people injured.

As a neighbour to the country, Iran has used its capacities and resources to help the people of Afghanistan to overcome the challenges that they have faced. We have been hosting millions of refugees, who unfortunately received minimal international assistance in the past 40 years. After the Taliban takeover, we did not at any time close our border with Afghanistan. Since last year, thousands of Afghans have entered Iran on a daily basis. However, neighbours of Afghanistan, including Iran, should not bear the entire burden associated with receiving Afghan refugees. Other countries should also welcome refugees.

We welcome the recent appointment of Ms. Roza Otunbayeva as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We continue our support for UNAMA in its efforts to address the humanitarian crisis and facilitate the intra-Afghan political process to promote peace and stability in the country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues its efforts to assist the people of Afghanistan and work with Afghanistan's neighbours and other partners to ensure durable peace and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Utebaev (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the French presidency for convening this briefing. At the same time, I would like to join other speakers in thanking our briefers for their remarks. We express our congratulations to Her Excellency Ms. Roza Otunbayeva on her appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. We are confident that her vast experience in various positions, including as the President of Kyrgyzstan, will contribute to achieving significant results regarding the United Nations efforts in the country and, ultimately, for the benefit of the people of fraternal Afghanistan.

We also commend the efforts of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and other international organizations in addressing the humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan expresses solidarity with the international community in overcoming the humanitarian crisis and stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. At the same time, we extend our support to the United Nations personnel in Afghanistan, who, despite all the challenges, continue to carry out the noble mission of supporting the Afghan people at this critical time.

Despite the temporary shift in the priorities of the global agenda due to the conflict in Ukraine, the issue of Afghanistan remains relevant at the international and regional levels. The international conference on Afghanistan held in Tashkent on 26 July, with the participation of many key countries of the world, is a testimony to the important role of that country

regarding the future development, stability and peace of the region.

We welcome the decision of the Taliban leadership to ban opium-poppy cultivation and drug production. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan expresses its concerns over the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and conveys its condolences to the families of the victims, including those in front of the Russian Embassy in Kabul. We reaffirm the importance of countering terrorism in Afghanistan and ensuring that its territory is not used as a platform or haven by any terrorist group or organization.

As a traditionally friendly country to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, located in the same region, is interested in a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, and it will always stay strong to create peace in that country. Based on humane principles, our country, among others, provided humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people last year. Kyrgyzstan also welcomes the general amnesty announced by the current authorities of Afghanistan and hopes for its full practical implementation.

The main priority for the international community should be restoring the Afghan economy and reintegrating Afghanistan into interregional economic processes. It is also important to invite the Afghan authorities to create an inclusive Government, as well as ensure human rights, including the rights of women and girls to education, work and social activity.

Kyrgyzstan has created a dialogue with the current Government of Afghanistan and continues to interact with it on various issues.

We hope that the international community will move forward in a coordinated manner on the Afghan issue and actively cooperate with each other, especially with the countries of the region, in order to ensure peace and stability in that country and provide the Afghan people with the necessary humanitarian and economic assistance.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan congratulates you, Madam President, and the French delegation, for a very successful presidency of the Security Council during this month. We are also grateful to you, Madam, for convening this discussion and wish to thank Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Potzel, Ms. Waly and Ms. Koofi

for the briefings we have had today. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Roza Otunbayeva of Kyrgyzstan on her appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Afghanistan today presents a unique challenge. Some 95 per cent of the 30 million Afghans are living in virtual destitution, without a functioning economy or banking system that would allow ordinary Afghans to make a living or be able to have a better future. Pakistan would like to see in Afghanistan a country that is at peace with itself and the world and that respects and nurtures all its citizens without regard to gender, ethnicity and religion. A peaceful, prosperous and connected Afghanistan is in our collective interest.

As a neighbour, Pakistan has a vital stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan. We have led the humanitarian efforts to help our Afghan brothers and sisters in their present situation. We must avoid another civil war, rising terrorism, drug trafficking or new refugees that none of Afghanistan's neighbours are in a position to accommodate. Pakistan urges the international community to respond in a positive way to the Secretary-General's appeal for \$4.2 billion in humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan and to release Afghanistan financial reserves, which are essential to reviving its banking system. As reported by the Secretary-General (S/2022/692), there remains a shortfall of \$2.59 billion in the humanitarian response plan he presented.

The early resumption of reconstruction activities and implementation of regional connectivity projects with Central Asia that are shovel-ready, as well as the extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan, can provide a pathway to economic growth and stabilization in the country. However, that requires funds and financial stability. Afghanistan's frozen national reserves should be released and channelled through Afghan institutions that can contribute to reviving the Afghan economy and its banking system. Without this, neither can trade take place effectively, nor can investment be expected. In the absence of such conditions, Afghanistan shall continue to remain on external life support and be in constant danger of economic collapse.

On human rights and girls' education, the countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

(OIC), including Pakistan, remain engaged through conversations between the Taliban and delegations of Islamic scholars in Ulama for finding ways and means to address the questions of sharia law and its interpretation, particularly with a view to facilitating educational prospects for Afghan women and girls. We are hopeful that progress can be made through this process if it is done with patience and persistence. Meanwhile, of the 4 million Afghans in refugee camps in Pakistan, all the girls are going to school and colleges, and we know that many Afghans are sending their daughters to attend school in Pakistan.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the efforts by the interim Afghan Government to encourage the return of former Afghan officials to the country and the announcement of a general amnesty are elements that should be built upon in order to promote the goal of greater inclusiveness in the governance of Afghanistan.

For Pakistan and for most of the international community, a most serious concern is terrorism emanating from and happening within Afghanistan. The recent rise in high-profile targeted killings and bombings, including against the Russian embassy, is a cause for special concern. Should we fail to provide the Afghan people and the authorities in Kabul with necessary and ongoing long-term economic solutions, there is a risk that anti-Taliban groups, particularly Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), will gain further strength in the country.

We expect the Taliban to prevent Afghanistan's territory from being utilized for terrorism against neighbours or any other country. In particular, eliminating the threat posed by ISIL-K, that is, Da'esh, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, as well as Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, is of vital importance for Pakistan. We will support all sincere efforts to neutralize and eliminate these terrorist groups, while fully respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The role of spoilers who wish to aid and abet terrorism against Pakistan from Afghan soil must also be checked, and the terrorist networks they have established must be dismantled in Afghanistan and the region. Similarly, counter-narcotics efforts by the Taliban are at risk of getting reversed in the absence of alternative means of supporting livelihoods.

Pakistan believes that the Security Council, the international community and UNAMA must develop a workable road map to advance the objectives they seek: human rights, inclusiveness and counter-terrorism. The much-maligned Doha agreement and the resolutions adopted by the Security Council itself since then contain elements that can provide such a road map towards normalcy in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is hopeful that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General will continue to maintain UNAMA's constructive engagement with the interim Government and find practical solutions to deal with the challenges that we face in Afghanistan.

For lasting peace and security in Afghanistan, sustained engagement remains the only practical way forward. To this end, we hope that the travel-ban exemptions will be reinstated forthwith. Pakistan will continue its endeavours to build peace and normalcy in Afghanistan within the format of Afghanistan's six immediate neighbours plus Russia, within the OIC, with UNAMA, with the European Union and with other friendly countries.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.