

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON
SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. We are grateful for the latest report of the Secretary-General and are appreciative of the briefing by the SRSG Staffan de Mistura. We also thank Dr. Zalmi Rassoul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan for his statement.

Mr. President,

The Kabul Conference marked a new phase in the partnership of the Afghan Government and international community the *Kabul Process* and a renewed commitment to a secure, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. The Conference demonstrated Afghan Government's determination to take full responsibility for Afghanistan's own development, security and governance, and the international community's willingness to realign international assistance in accordance with Afghanistan's priorities and action plans. The success of *Kabul Process* largely depends on detailing and implementing the commitments flowing from the Kabul Conference.

The holding of national assembly elections on September 18, in which over 2500 candidates contested, is an important step forward in strengthening of the democratic framework in Afghanistan. We appreciate UNAMA's lead role in providing overall coordination of international support to the electoral process.

Mr. President,

India and Afghanistan enjoy a relationship based on history, civilization, trade and cultural exchanges and shared values and interests stretching back thousands of years.

India is committed to the unity, integrity and independence of Afghanistan underpinned by democracy and cohesive pluralism and free from external interference. India has contributed to these goals through our Development Partnership which is implemented

entirely in accordance with the priorities of the Afghan Government and people. Our Assistance programmes are spread all over Afghanistan and cover all sectors of development: humanitarian, infrastructural, institution and capacity building, small-scale quick gestation projects, and agriculture. The ultimate aim of our assistance, which presently stands at over US\$ 1.3 bn, is to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan state and people to stand on their own feet in the areas of governance and services for the Afghan people.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan's stability and economic development depend a lot on its neighbours and the region as a whole. Afghanistan's greatest economic potential perhaps resides in its immense potential as a trade, transport and energy hub, and as a bridge linking Central, West, South Asia and the Gulf. Its prosperity also depends on the consumer market of nearly 1.5 billion people in the South-Asian sub-continent. The recent reports of Afghanistan's great mineral wealth also open up possibilities for mining and investment. But for Afghanistan to realize its full potential in these areas, Afghanistan's neighbours need to come together to forge greater regional cooperation and facilitate trade and transit.

Growing economic inter-dependence will also help in weaning disaffected youth away from insurgency and militancy and in creating a zone of co-prosperity in the region. We support the wishes of the Government of Afghanistan to take the lead in this direction.

Mr. President,

Peace and reintegration efforts in Afghanistan could succeed provided they are fully Afghan-led and Afghan-owned and carry all sections of Afghanistan's population together as well as abide by the redlines agreed to at the London Conference, i.e., giving up violence, cutting off all links with terrorism, and accepting the democratic and pluralistic values of the Afghan Constitution, including women's rights.

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

The international community should also ensure that there is no selectivity in dealing with terrorism. The fight against terrorism cannot be compartmentalized. One cannot distinguish between Al Qaeda and plethora of terrorist organisations which have imbibed the goals and techniques of Al Qaeda. Security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al Qaeda, Taliban, LeT and other terrorist and extremist groups operating from within and outside Afghanistan's borders. It is, therefore, essential to

ensure that support, sustenance and sanctuaries for terrorist organisations from outside Afghanistan are ended forthwith.

As we discuss today, it is worrisome that there has been a continuing deterioration in the security environment. The UNSG report notes that there has been a 69% increase in security incidents as compared to the same months in 2009.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the international community as a whole has made a great contribution in assisting Afghanistan to stand on its own feet. The Kabul Conference was a big step in the right direction. It is important that the international community remains steadfast in its commitment in supporting Afghanistan. We welcome these efforts and are fully supportive of them. We support the good work done by UNAMA.

Thank you

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