

**Statement by Mr. Vinay Kumar, Acting Permanent Representative of
India at the UN Security Council debate on UNAMA on July 6, 2011**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council and commend the PR of Gabon and his team for steering the work of the Council in June. I also wish to thank you for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I also thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his statement. We are grateful for the latest report of the Secretary General and are appreciative of the briefing by SRSG Staffan de Mistura.

Mr. President,

2. Afghanistan is amidst the beginning of a phase of implementation of the transition where the Afghan National Security Forces would start assuming security responsibility in seven key areas including Kabul. This is a critical phase for Afghanistan as well as the international community.

3. We are deeply concerned that the challenges confronting Afghanistan, particularly on the security front, do not appear to be receding. On the contrary, the overall security environment continues to deteriorate. The Secretary General's report notes that there has been a 51% increase in security incidents as compared to the same period in 2010, characterized by significant increase in suicide attacks, abductions and assassinations.

4. Terrorist attacks on the UNAMA compound in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Government buildings in Kandhar, the coordinated suicide attack at the highly secured Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul and on a hospital in Logar corroborate the change in tactics wherein the Taliban and other opposition groups are opting for soft civilian targets. As pointed out in our last statement on this subject on 17th March, these attacks point to a dangerous osmosis of ideologies, ambitions, training and operations among the syndicate of terrorism in the region with suicide terrorism as its main technique, and targets not limited to Afghanistan. This, the international community in its hurry to withdraw from a combat role in Afghanistan, will ignore at its peril.

5. It, therefore, becomes crucial that the transition must be linked to the ground realities rather than rigid timetable. A constant assessment and review of the evolving situation in coordination with the Afghan Government is essential in this regard.

6. We appreciate the enhanced collaboration among the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Building the requisite strength and capabilities of ANSF, along with adequate enablers, is imperative to the transition of security responsibilities. It is important that the transition must be Afghan owned, transition must be planned and implemented in a systematic manner, and transition must ensure the protection and promotion of the human rights of all Afghans.

7. For security and stabilization of Afghanistan, it is important to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism which include elements of the Al Qaida, Taliban, Laskar-e-Taiba and other terrorist and extremist groups operating from within and outside Afghanistan's borders. These groups are ideologically and operationally fused and their bonds have strengthened over the years.

8. As the Secretary General's report points out, the insurgency in Afghanistan remains resilient, demonstrating capability to launch multiple complex attacks. The continued resilience of the insurgents, their changing tactics, their numbers and their spreading out to areas earlier considered safe are a grim reminder that the security gains would remain transient unless the international community is able to firmly deal with safe havens for terrorist groups outside Afghanistan's borders.

9. India fully supports an Afghan-led inclusive and transparent process of reconciliation, adhering to the redlines as enunciated by the Afghan Government in the London and Kabul communiqués. It must be accompanied by an inclusive political process and intra-Afghan dialogue. It is important that antecedents of those willing to reintegrate must be ascertained and it needs to be ensured that they are genuine reconciles.

10. We support the views and decisions of the Government and people of Afghanistan as they seek to build a more secure, stable and prosperous future and a strong democracy in their country. The Afghan people must be allowed to re-build their land in conditions of peace and security free from interference from their neighbours and they must be the arbiters of their own destiny.

11. It is our expectation that the new sanctions regime established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1988 would enable the Afghan Government to have a greater say in confronting the challenges from those constituting a threat to peace, security and stability of Afghanistan. Afghan ownership and leadership are also vital for development and reconstruction in Afghanistan. This also implies greater coherence, coordination and further streamlining of international community's development-related efforts including aligning of assistance with Afghan national priorities and increasingly working through Afghan institutions. We are happy to note that UNAMA continues to align its priorities with the Afghan government.

Mr. President,

12. India and Afghanistan share a strategic partnership based on the strong foundations of rich, historical and civilizational bonds and shared pursuit of regional peace and prosperity. India remains committed to partnering the Government and people of Afghanistan in the building of a peaceful, stable, democratic and pluralistic nation.

13. India's assistance programme is spread across Afghanistan and spans almost the entire gamut of economic and social development activities. Assisting Afghanistan in its reconstruction efforts, in capacity building and skills for human resource development, and building Afghanistan's public institutions is a special area of priority for India.

14. As mentioned by Ambassador Tanin in his statement, during his last visit to Afghanistan on May 12-13, 2011, our Prime Minister announced an additional assistance of US \$ 500 million, over and above India's existing commitments of US \$ 1.5 billion.

15. Afghanistan's stability and economic development depend a lot on its neighbours and the region as a whole. Closer economic integration with India and other countries in the region is the key to Afghanistan's future and prosperity.

16. The area of Afghanistan south of the Hindu Kush all the way up to the Ganges Delta, form a part of a single geographical and economic basin, with the plains of India constituting the centre of its economic gravity. It is by far Afghanistan's largest regional market – a potential source of investment, skills, training, technology and expertise and a model of democracy and natural institution building in a culturally comfortable context.

17. Afghanistan has an immense potential as a land bridge linking Central, West and South Asia and emerging as a trade, transport and energy hub. The recent developments in regional cooperation including the signing of the agreement on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan- India gas pipeline project would provide added impetus to regional cooperation. Growing economic inter-dependence would catalyze peace and prosperity in the region at large and in Afghanistan, in particular. Afghanistan as a SAARC member since 2005 is increasingly becoming active as a fellow SAARC member. India, as a neighbour, will continue its efforts towards the greater integration of Afghanistan in the regional framework.

18. In conclusion, Mr. President, we commend the good work done by UNAMA. At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the international community continues to remain steadfast in its support to the Government of Afghanistan as per its priorities.

Thank you.

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