

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item: 36

“The Situation in Afghanistan”

INDIA STATEMENT

Mr President,

I would like to begin by thanking all delegations that participated in the consultations on this year's resolution, in particular our German colleagues for having so ably facilitated the negotiations.

2. We also appreciate the thoughtful statement of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, outlining the recent developments in her country and articulating the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for her people.

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

Mr President,

4. This year, Afghanistan marked a century of independence. Fittingly, this year has been equally significant in terms of developments relating to peace efforts and the consolidation of the democratic process.

5. We commend the people, the Government and the security forces of Afghanistan for the conduct of **Presidential elections** on 28 September, amidst extremely challenging circumstances. The enthusiastic participation of the Afghan people, including women, in the process, despite threats, intimidation and violence, reflects their desire and faith in democratic governance and rejection of the evil forces of terror and violence. Whatever may be the result of the elections, we hope that they contribute to the strengthening of an inclusive democratic system in Afghanistan.

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

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

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

Mr President,

9. Speaking from this podium in September this year, the Chair of Afghanistan's Delegation to the General Debate of the 74th session of the General Assembly said, and I quote, "Peace is our common objective and terrorists are our common enemy. We must not rush the former at the risk of empowering the latter."

10. According to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index released a few weeks ago, Afghanistan lost more lives to terrorism than any other country in 2018, with over 7000 deaths. Of equal concern are the deepening linkages between organised crime, narcotics trafficking and terror financing. In this context we welcome the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in fighting illicit drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan.

Mr President,

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

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

Mr President,

13. The courage and resilience of the Afghan people are a source of pride for our region. India remains committed to continue its efforts to strengthen this spirit by supporting all initiatives designed to end violence and bring peace back. We urge the General Assembly to provide its full support to the Government of Afghanistan, and to draft resolution A/74/L13.

Thank you.