

Security Council Open Debate on UNAMA, March 19th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Tuomioja, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations.

Finland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

The situation in Afghanistan is at a turning point. Afghanistan is going through multiple transition processes at the same time. Those processes are interlinked and equally important. The Afghan National Security Forces will soon be fully responsible for security in the whole country.

The Government of Afghanistan is committed to crucial reforms in governance. There is still a lot of work to be done in that sector, and Afghanistan should not be left alone during these critical years. Finland is fully committed to supporting Afghanistan when the country embarks on the transformation decade.

Afghanistan has become one of Finland's largest development partners. Our total official development assistance to Afghanistan between 2013 and 2017 is scheduled to be almost \$200 million.

International aid is needed to build on the gains that the Afghan Government has achieved in the past years. Good governance, democracy and the rule of law are some of the most important areas that we need to support in the coming years. At the same time, we expect the Afghan Government to fulfill its obligations under the mutual commitments made, including the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

Human rights, particularly women's rights, are the cornerstone of Afghanistan's development. To that end, Finland will continue its cooperation with Afghanistan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Ever since the overthrow of the Taliban, there have been important gains in strengthening human rights and the rule of law. Nevertheless, a lot remains to be done, and no backsliding can be allowed. Afghan citizens, in particular women, still face insecurity in public spaces and at home, as well as a lack of access to an effective and fair justice system and legal representation.

It is of vital importance for Afghanistan's development that there be a strong international civilian presence, under Afghan leadership, in the country after the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force. UNAMA has a central role in supporting Afghanistan's development efforts, providing good offices for the peace process, promoting and protecting human rights and coordinating international aid efforts.

We are extremely concerned about the budget cuts that UNAMA is facing. If fully implemented, those cuts would seriously hamper the Mission's ability to maintain a meaningful presence across the country. It is imperative that UNAMA be granted adequate resources to fully perform its mandated tasks. I would respectfully urge the Security Council to do everything in its power to ensure that UNAMA is granted adequate resources to fulfill its important mandate. We owe that to the people of Afghanistan.