

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

Statement by Mr. Wittig, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations.

Let me, at the outset, extend my thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his great leadership at the helm of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and for all his efforts in support of the Afghan people, and to his team.

Germany will continue to support Afghanistan in close partnership throughout the transformation decade. At the Bonn and Tokyo Conferences, Afghanistan and the international community set the framework for cooperation and reaffirmed their mutual commitments. We are therefore pleased to see that the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework has gained considerable momentum, and we commit ourselves to further work towards implementing it. Today, I would like to focus on two issues that are key in that regard.

The first issue is elections. We welcome the progress achieved by the Government of Afghanistan in preparing for the presidential elections to be held in April 2014. Yet challenges remain. We look forward to the swift adoption of a legal framework for the elections, as well as to the timely appointment of a new chairman and commissioners for the Independent Election Commission. We emphasize the need to establish a credible complaints mechanism and to put in place effective measures to prevent widespread electoral fraud. Finally, and most important, we encourage all Afghan stakeholders to engage in a constructive dialogue on these issues so as to find the broadest possible consensus.

UNAMA can assume a beneficial role in supporting the Afghan-led and -owned process. We therefore welcome the decision taken by the Afghan authorities to request UNAMA's support for the 2014-2015 elections and the subsequent United Nations electoral needs assessment mission that was undertaken in December and January. Germany stands ready to further support that process alongside UNAMA and its international partners. Our shared objective is to hold inclusive, transparent and credible elections in Afghanistan that will contribute to the sustainable development of the country's political system and be firmly founded in the Afghan Constitution.

Secondly, a stable security environment is of paramount importance in achieving Afghanistan's goal of further developing into a democratic and economically thriving country. We therefore welcome recent developments in the Afghan-led reconciliation process. That includes efforts by Afghanistan and the international community to establish conditions conducive to substantive dialogue, such as preparations for the opening of a Taliban office in Doha. In that regard, we also appreciate the contribution of regional actors. Their support is critical to fostering the peace and reconciliation process. We encourage all sides to strengthen their efforts.

I would like to conclude by underlining that the United Nations will continue to play a crucial role, both in the year to come and during the transformation decade. We therefore welcome the Council's adoption of resolution 2096 (2013), which renews UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months. Germany will continue to support UNAMA in fulfilling its mandate, particularly in its support for the Afghan Government and in preparing for the presidential elections, in protecting and promoting human rights, particularly women's rights, and in ensuring effective coordination among donors and the Government of Afghanistan. In order for UNAMA to live up to those expectations, we strongly support providing adequate resources for the Mission and its appropriate presence throughout the country.

Finally, we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue during the next month on UNAMA's role after 2014.