

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

Statement by Mr. Kim Sook, Permanent Mission of Republic of Korea to the United Nations.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on Afghanistan. I also thank Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan for his statement, and I would like to welcome Mr. Bob Carr, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, to the Security Council debate today.

Afghanistan faces a number of issues that it must tackle as it moves towards the security, political and economic transition in 2014. The phased transfer of lead security responsibility from the International Security Assistance Force to Afghan security institutions is progressing as planned. The continued efforts of the Afghan Government to implement the commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, including preparations for the elections, are noteworthy. The timely development of a credible electoral framework through a transparent and participatory process is the key to holding successful elections. The work of the High Peace Council in the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process should also be duly noted and encouraged.

We also welcome recent progress in the development arena, including the endorsement of the aid management policy. Over the course of the past year, the international community has demonstrated renewed commitment to providing long-term support for the Afghan people at conferences in Chicago in the United States of America, Kabul and Tokyo. Now, timely and faithful implementation of the commitments is vital to ensuring a successful transition. While the Afghan Government's ownership of the overall process must be ensured, the sustained assistance of the international community will be all the more critical for the peace and stability of Afghanistan leading up to 2014 and beyond.

We welcome the decline in the number of civilian casualties in 2012, the first such decline in six years. The international forces and Afghan authorities have made progress in minimizing the risk of civilian casualties. However, we are deeply concerned that women, girls and children continue to suffer enormously, including through the use of children as suicide bombers and the targeted killings of women.

Increased efforts to train the Afghanistan national security forces and provide them with all necessary support will remain crucial tasks in order to effectively protect civilians and ensure accountability.

Afghanistan's refugee situation remains one of the largest protracted such situations in the world, with nearly 3 million refugees and half a million internally displaced persons. We call on the Afghan Government to enhance its efforts to protect and assist them in order to ensure their sustainable return.

Another area of concern is the increasing production of, and trafficking in, narcotics in Afghanistan. With an increase in poppy cultivation for the third consecutive year, more efforts are needed to address that threat. We urge the international community and regional partners to further support Afghan-led efforts to tackle the drug problem.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been actively supporting Afghanistan's capacity-building. As part of the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) evolution strategy, the Korean Government transferred its PRT base, previously located in Parwan province, to the Afghan Government at the end of last year, and is currently running a down-sized PRT. Furthermore, following a contribution of \$15 million to the Afghan National Army trust fund in 2011, the Korean Government contributed an additional \$15 million to that trust fund, and another \$15 million to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan in 2012.

We appreciate the crucial role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in assisting the people of Afghanistan and laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development. With the adoption of today's resolution 2096 (2013) to extend the mandate of UNAMA for a year, we look forward to the Mission's continued role in supporting the Afghan Government in development and governance priorities, electoral preparations and the peace and reconciliation process. The Republic of Korea will remain committed to working with the Afghan Government and its people and will lend its full support to UNAMA in implementing its mandate.