

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security**  
**October 28, 2011, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Faqiri , Representative of Afghanistan*

I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's debate, which offers us all an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to protecting and ensuring women's rights and their momentous role in peace and security. I also take the opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/598\*) and his strong words of support. And I thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, for her work and for her statement.

The history of war and violence has left a disconcerting impact on my country. Violence still takes its toll on every Afghan's life. I hope that the anguish facing every Afghan family will one day come to an end. Women continue to bear the bulk of the burden of conflict in Afghanistan, while their right to secure, healthy and prosperous lives is still in peril.

We meet today to recognize the crucial role of women in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the tangible fruits of which have already been seen in Afghanistan in the decisive presence of women at the Consultative Peace Jirga in 2010 and in the continuing efforts to ensure women's participation in leadership positions within and outside of the Afghan Government. The debate is particularly appropriate as Afghanistan is entering the second phase of transition to Afghan leadership and ownership and increased responsibility for security and economic development.

With regard to development, we have begun to implement our 10-year national action plan for the women of Afghanistan based upon the priorities of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. As part of the action plan, we have established gender units in 14 of the 25 Government ministries. However, given the 10-year timeline, accelerated efforts are necessary to ensure the full implementation of that very comprehensive action plan, which incorporates vital goals that include achieving a 30 per cent rate of representation of women in governmental positions by the end of 2013 and their 35 per cent participation rate among university students by the end of 2012.

We have also made strides in ensuring the rule of law, most recently the establishment of a national commission on the elimination of violence against women, following the enactment of the law in that regard in December 2010. Those steps have been vital in enhancing Afghan women's access to legal redress and have also sent a strong message that the Afghanistan Government is committed to the rights of women and to ensuring that there is no impunity for those who violate them.

Ensuring the rights of women is only half of the battle; we also need to see the full participation of women, as resolution 1325 (2000) reminds us that they have a vital role to play in peace and security. The representation of women in governance and their political participation has steadily increased. We have succeeded in holding two presidential and two parliamentary elections, in which women actively participated as candidates, elections staff, poll monitors and electorates.

Women comprise 25 per cent of the Parliament, thus ranking Afghanistan thirtieth among the countries of the world with the highest rate of women representatives in Parliament. The Afghanistan National Parliament has also established a resource centre for women parliamentarians to enhance their capacity to effectively include women's voices and perspectives in national development and reconstruction plans.

When reviewing these facts and figures, let us not lose sight of the great personal risk that these women undertake in order to participate in the governance of their country and in their future. I wish to take this opportunity to honour the women who continue take risks in order to assume an active role in the future direction, peace and security of our country.

Our international partners have assisted the Afghan Government in our endeavours. UN-Women has administered a multi-donor trust fund for the elimination of violence against women that provided grants for national organizations to combat violence against women. I am very pleased to report that, in collaboration with UN-Women, Afghanistan has submitted its first country report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The continued collaboration of our Government, international partners and both Afghan and international civil society groups will be vital to ensure the full realization of women's rights in a strong and stable Afghanistan.

Building a stable and secure environment that enables women to live free of intimidation and violence and promotes their participation and leadership in efforts to maintain peace and security is one of the core objectives of the Afghan Government.

We are also focusing on women political actors at national, subnational and local levels, as well as on capacity-building and advocacy strategies to enable them to obtain critical roles in high-level decision-making processes, policy and law-making positions in key Government institutions and to assist them in carrying out their significant political and social responsibilities.

In conclusion, with the support of our partners and the international community, we will continue to work towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), while recognizing that our goal of sustainable peace and security in Afghanistan will not be achieved without the full participation of the entire Afghan nation.