

Security Council Open Debate on Afghanistan and UNAMA
20 March 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr Menan, Representative of Togo

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2012/133). I would also like to congratulate the German delegation on its crucial role in managing the Afghanistan issue and for preparing the draft resolution that will be submitted to the Council on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

The report under consideration takes stock of the substantial progress made towards the established indicators, some of which I will mention here. With respect to security, the public image of the Afghan police has considerably improved, thanks not only to an increase in well-supervised officers who are trained and operational, but also to the increased role of women within those ranks.

In the political sphere, since the Bonn Conference of 5 December 2011, the debate has focused on the best way to manage the country's political process. From that standpoint, national and regional mechanisms to strengthen efforts towards promoting peace as well as reintegration and reconciliation processes that are open to all have been developed and implemented by the Afghan Government.

Furthermore, my country is delighted that the Afghan authorities are seeking to extend their authority in the context of good governance throughout the country, to which the authorities have given top priority.

The involvement of the international community in capacity-building, both of the authorities and institutions, that particularly takes into consideration women's participation and constitutionally guaranteed quotas is to be commended. Additionally, it should be noted that the fight against corruption has also seen progress due to establishment of the joint Government and international Monitoring and Evaluation Committee composed of national and international representatives. Its mission is to achieve 60 well targeted aims, which Togo would like to see implemented gradually.

Those encouraging developments have only been possible thanks to a favourable regional context that is characterized by good cooperation on work aimed at peace and security in the country. Such a positive sign could herald the return of investors in Afghanistan.

Togo hopes that the ministerial conference planned for Kabul in June will lead to conclusions capable of improving coherence within existing regional mechanisms. My country would like to take the opportunity of this debate to express its gratitude to the countries that are friends of Afghanistan for their unwavering efforts to help the country to bring an end to the situation of crisis and insecurity in which it has found itself for now more than a decade.

We hope that the NATO summit and the Tokyo conference to take in place in May and July, respectively, will constitute a turning point in the implementation of the mutual commitments defined in Bonn in December 2011. At the same time, Togo is delighted that UNAMA, in line with the pertinent resolution, is implementing its political mandate, which includes good offices, political outreach, support for the processes under way in the country related to strengthening electoral institutions as well as protecting, promoting and enforcing human rights.

Furthermore, we cannot fail to mention the crucial role that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), under NATO command, continues to play alongside Afghan national forces in ensuring the people's security and protecting the country's infrastructure and institutions.

My delegation congratulates the entire United Nations system as it continues to work steadfastly, in an extremely difficult context, to support the peace process, at the end of which Afghanistan will be able to take control of its own destiny, in line with the decision taken at the Bonn Conference stipulating the departure of a large majority of foreign forces in 2014.

Despite such progress, it is unfortunate that the peace process in Afghanistan continues to face numerous obstacles and challenges that hinder the long and laborious march of the Afghan people towards full autonomy. Those include the recurring question of security represented by terrorist acts and a campaign of intimidation and assassination targeting senior Government officials and security forces, local political leaders and religious leaders. That climate of violence is coupled with local power struggles.

The recent and unfortunate events that have been attributed to ISAF forces are not likely to calm the ostensible hostility of certain organized groups, such as the Taliban, against the foreign presence that, nevertheless, benefits the country. It is important for a frank and constructive dialogue to be established between the Government and representatives of those groups in order to create a climate of confidence and achieve the task at hand.

Furthermore, the fight against terrorism, drugs and contraband remains a major challenge in terms of ensuring peace in the country. For that fight to be successful, all neighbouring countries must cooperate, in particular through participation in the regional programme developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Above and beyond those challenges, UNAMA has worked in synergy with other organizations and programmes of the United Nations, and we commend the Mission once again. It must continue its work to ensure stability in the country. That task requires more time and the support of the Council at this time, to renew the mandate of UNAMA for an additional 12 months.

Togo firmly supports the extension of the mandate of UNAMA and at the same time wishes Mr. Kubiš and his team every success in carrying out their task.